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Fifty-fifth session
Item 16 of the provisional agenda

# REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMISSION ON THE PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES ON ITS FIFTIETH SESSION

Report of Mr. El-Hadji Guissé, Chairman of the Sub-Commission at its fiftieth session, prepared in accordance with paragraphs 9 (d) and 11 of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/28

## Introduction

1. In its resolution 1998/28 of 17 April 1998, entitled "Work of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities", the Commission on Human Rights welcomed the further steps taken by the Sub-Commission to reform and improve its methods of work, in particular by restructuring its agenda during its forty-ninth session, by making efforts to implement its decision 1996/114 of 29 August 1996 to achieve a compilation of the existing rules of procedure and procedural questions to be resolved, by deciding to limit the initiation of new studies (decision 1996/113 of 29 August 1996), by adopting criteria for new studies (decision 1997/112 of 27 August 1997), by establishing a sessional working group on the methods of work of the Sub-Commission (decision 1997/104 of 5 August 1997) and by enhancing its cooperation with all relevant bodies.

2. In the same resolution, the Commission invited the Sub-Commission to continue its efforts to avoid duplication with the work of the Commission and further to improve its efficiency, taking into account the views of Member States, and, in that context, called upon the Sub-Commission and its members:

(a) To focus on its primary role as an advisory body of the Commission on Human Rights;

(b) To give particular attention to the selection of studies, taking into account recommendations of the Commission and of treaty bodies, and, when choosing subjects for study, to explain the choice made so as to enable the Commission adequately to assess the need for that study, and to complete all studies within a reasonable time;

(c) To adhere strictly to the principles of independence, impartiality and expertise;

(d) To facilitate efficient and effective participation of non-governmental organizations;

(e) To improve consultations with special rapporteurs undertaking studies for the Sub-Commission;

(f) Further to enhance cooperation with mechanisms of the Commission, and, within their competence, with all relevant bodies, including human rights treaty bodies and relevant United Nations research institutions;

(g) To focus strictly on questions relating to human rights in accordance with its mandate.

3. The Commission also called upon the Sub-Commission to devote sufficient time at its fiftieth session to the discussion of its working methods and to prepare specific recommendations on that issue for consideration by the Commission.

4. The Commission requested the Chairman of the Sub-Commission at its fiftieth session to report to the Commission at its fifty-fifth session on significant aspects of the work of the Sub-Commission.

5. In accordance with that request, the Chairman of the Sub-Commission submits the present concise report to the Commission. More details regarding the various aspects of the work of the fiftieth session of the Sub-Commission will if necessary be provided by the Chairman of the Sub-Commission in his statement to the Commission at its fifty-fifth session. The report of the Sub-Commission on its fiftieth session is before the Commission in document E/CN.4/1999/4-E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/45.

## I. AGENDA OF THE SUB-COMMISSION - FURTHER RATIONALIZATION

6. In response to the Commission's request that the Sub-Commission should reform and improve its methods of work in order to further enhance its efficiency, the Sub-Commission has continued with the process of rationalizing its agenda, begun at its forty-ninth session, by once again adopting an agenda containing 14 items (as against 22 items at its forty-eighth session). This rationalization concerns both procedural issues relating to the organization of its work and substantive issues regarding the various aspects of the mandate entrusted to it by the Commission and the Economic and Social Council: it consists partly in grouping together several interrelated issues under one agenda item and partly in greater use of the biennial consideration of some sub-items. It is more important than ever for the Sub-Commission to rationalize its agenda, not by cutting down the amount of time allocated to

it, but by varying the amount of time devoted to each agenda item and eliminating any risk of creating duplication of work. The restructuring of the Sub-Commission's agenda will continue to be the subject of particular attention since it has enabled the Sub-Commission to manage its work better in the limited time available at each session and to make a more in-depth study of the items under discussion.

## II. STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

7. In paragraph 10 of its resolution 1998/28, the Commission invited its Chairman to address the Sub-Commission about the debate under the Commission agenda item entitled "Report of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on its forty-ninth session". Pursuant to that resolution, the Sub-Commission extended an invitation to the Chairman of the fifty-fourth session of the Commission, Mr. Jacob Selebi, who addressed the Sub-Commission on 10 August 1998. The statement by the Chairman of the Commission to the fiftieth session of the Sub-Commission was received with particular attention since it emphasized the Sub-Commission's role and mandate in the context of the Commission's review of its mechanisms.

8. The Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights said that the Sub-Commission, as an advisory body of the Commission, had a central role to play by making recommendations to the Commission for the enhancement of its effectiveness and clearly specifying its unique contribution in the form of working groups, comprehensive studies for the benefit of human rights bodies, especially the treaty bodies, and work on country situations that were not under consideration by the Commission.

9. Welcoming the Sub-Commission's efforts to rationalize its agenda and its decisions to limit the initiation of new studies and to achieve a compilation of the existing rules of procedure and procedural questions to be resolved, the Chairman of the Commission underlined the need to pursue and extend the reform already begun. With regard to new studies, he said it was necessary to pay particular attention to study selection and to submit studies to the Commission only if they met the needs of the Commission, treaty monitoring bodies and working groups, and focused on core human rights issues.

10. The Chairman of the Commission encouraged the Sub-Commission to continue to develop a partnership with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to improve its relationship with them so that each side benefited from the other's expertise, to enter into constructive dialogue and to prepare draft resolutions, as far as possible in closed meetings, in order to maintain its independence and impartiality. On certain matters, NGOs should make public statements before the Sub-Commission but, on others, they might find a more receptive audience in the context of informal discussions with special rapporteurs, chairpersons of working groups and other members.

11. Lastly, the Chairman of the Commission said he trusted that the Sub-Commission would demonstrate, on its fiftieth anniversary, that it could still make a unique and significant contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights.

## III. METHODS OF WORK OF THE SUB-COMMISSION: ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SUB-COMMISSION

12. The fiftieth session of the Sub-Commission took place against the background of reforms of the mechanisms of the United Nations with regard to the operation and even the future of a number of its bodies. In that context, and in pursuance of paragraph 9 (a) of Commission resolution 1998/28 and of Commission decision 1998/112, consultations were held at the Sub-Commission on 10 August 1998, first at a closed meeting then at a public meeting, between members of the Sub-Commission and the Bureau of the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights. With the active participation of all its members, the Sub-Commission prepared a document (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/38) representing the common position of its members on the reforms begun or to be undertaken, which was presented to the Bureau of the Commission at a closed meeting it held with the Sub-Commission. A number of the points raised in this document deserve to be highlighted.

13. In this document, the Chairman of the Sub-Commission notes that a review of its activities demonstrates that the Sub-Commission has considerable achievements to its credit, not only in the fields of standard-setting, promotion of standards and encouragement of implementation, but also in the field of human rights policy-making. Because of its openness and its flexibility, it functions as a forum where new ideas are identified, debated and crystallized into proposals which in due time affect the work of the other United Nations human rights bodies, including the Sub-Commission's parent body, the Commission on Human Rights.

14. Some of the major initiatives taken by the Sub-Commission are now an integrated part of the human rights machinery. For example, the Sub-Commission played a major role in mobilizing the United Nations system to combat apartheid. Its annual report concerning adverse consequences of investment and trade with South Africa during the apartheid era was vital in strengthening the United Nations sanctions which contributed to the transition to a democratic and non-racist Government in that country.

15. The Sub-Commission prepared the initial draft of the United Nations Declaration and later the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the same applied to the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Forced Disappearance, the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples now pending before the Commission, the Declaration on the Human Rights of Individuals Who Are Not Nationals of the Country in which They Live, the Principles for the protection of persons with mental illness and the improvement of mental health care, and the Guidelines for the Regulation of Computerized Personal Data Files.

16. The preparation within the Sub-Commission of principles and guidelines as well as the first draft declaration on the right and responsibility of individuals, groups and organs of society to promote and protect universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms paved the way for the establishment by the Commission of the working group which elaborated what is known as the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

17. The Sub-Commission also played an important role in the creation of thematic mechanisms of the Commission, which it also helped to implement. The first thematic procedure, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, arose from a recommendation of the Sub-Commission. Several studies prepared in the Sub-Commission or its working groups have resulted in the appointment by the Commission of thematic rapporteurs and working groups: the origin of the Special Rapporteurs on freedom of information and expression, on the independence of the judiciary, on religious intolerance and on racism in any part of the world, and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, can all be traced back to the Sub-Commission.

18. The Sub-Commission makes three relatively unique contributions to the human rights field:

(a) Undertaking comprehensive studies that contribute to the work of the human rights bodies, particularly to the United Nations treaty-monitoring bodies;

(b) Bringing to the attention of the Commission situations not under review by the Commission but which appear to reveal gross and systematic violations of human rights or new human rights concerns; and

(c) Supporting its working groups.

In addition, the Sub-Commission has a useful and unique relationship with NGOs, providing them with access and, thereby, the Sub-Commission with information and expertise. The Sub-Commission has made substantial achievements in each of these aspects and can make further contributions to the Commission for the continued and future enhancement of human rights mechanisms and procedures.

19. The annual review that the Sub-Commission holds on situations of violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms and, in particular, of the policies of racial discrimination and segregation in all countries constitutes a central part of its work. In particular, it is one of the most relevant international forums in the field of human rights; it allows new situations, trends and facts that emerge in the world to be expressed; it enables an analysis of concrete situations to be undertaken together with more general items that it considers, thus giving to thematic studies a wider comprehension and objectivity; it allows the study of countries and cases not considered by the Commission, or allows new facts worthy of attention to be examined; and it enables urgent measures to be adopted when the situation requires.

20. The thematic working groups form a vital part of the Sub-Commission's method of work. They have provided and continue to provide the opportunity for a participatory study of current trends and difficulties in thematically important areas, and involve subtle monitoring of human rights problems by providing a channel for the airing of grievances. The NGOs and government observers who attend provide useful information on the basis of which the working groups draw up their conclusions, recommendations and choice of further steps to be taken.

21. The Sub-Commission is well aware that every United Nations mechanism has to evaluate its own performance critically in the light of new developments and needs. It has over the last few years carried out a thorough review of its methods of work and made significant changes. In 1991/1992, an inter-sessional working group prepared "Guidelines concerning its methods of work". Further revisions were made in 1994 and 1995 and these have been communicated to the Commission.

22. In 1996 the Sub-Commission initiated a process to adopt a consolidated set of its rules of procedure and methods of work, based on a working paper by one of its members. The intention is to complete this work in 1998. The changes are partly the initiatives of the Sub-Commission itself. For example, the Sub-Commission has initiated a major change through its decision 1997/113 of 27 August 1997 intended to avoid duplicating work on human rights violations which are considered under the public procedure of the Commission. As a result of some closed meetings which made it possible for the members to discuss practical issues more freely and fully, it has also implemented other major reforms contributing to its effectiveness, including improvements in the constructive dialogue between its members. This is an ongoing process that all the members hope to continue as needs arise.

23. In its resolution 1998/28, the Commission expressed appreciation of these improvements and called on the Sub-Commission to continue these efforts with the dual purpose of avoiding duplication with the work of the Commission and enhancing the effectiveness of the contribution which the Sub-Commission can make in its primary role as the expert body advising the Commission.

24. It is of the utmost importance to safeguard the independence of Sub-Commission members and of the Sub-Commission as a collective body. Although cooperation and coordination with other human rights bodies are useful and, in some cases, absolutely necessary, every effort should be made to preserve, encourage and enhance the Sub-Commission's potential not only to build on the initiatives taken by other bodies (including its parent bodies), in accordance with their respective competence, but also to explore new areas in accordance with present-day world events at its own initiative. By the same token, these bodies should avoid taking actions which would in fact limit or endanger the Sub-Commission's freedom to take initiatives in accordance with its mandate.

## IV. WORK OF THE SUB-COMMISSION AT ITS FIFTIETH SESSION

25. The Sub-Commission conducts its work partly through its study programme, partly by use of its working groups and partly by plenary debates and decisions. Four inter-sessional working groups met before the fiftieth session: the Working Group on Communications, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, the Working Group on Minorities and the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery.

26. The sessional working group on the administration of justice also met during the fiftieth session. On the group's recommendation, the Sub-Commission decided to submit to the Commission for its consideration the draft international convention on the protection of all persons from enforced disappearance.

7. The Sub-Commission held 36 meetings and heard more than 520 statements, 36 of which were made by NGOs and 106 by government observers. One hundred nd eighty-six documents were examined by the Sub-Commission, amounting o 1,382 pages. One hundred and forty-eight accredited NGOs attended the ession, as well as 110 delegations of government observers and 6 United Nations bodies. In all, the Sub-Commission adopted 30 resolutions nd 15 decisions (in 1997 it adopted 43 resolutions and 19 decisions).

8. On 26 August 1998, the Sub-Commission held a special meeting to mark he fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of luman Rights.

9. The Sub-Commission decided to establish, for a three-year period, a sessional working group composed of five of its members, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical distribution, to examine the working methods and activities of transnational corporations and to convene an expert seminar, in close cooperation with relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, if necessary without financial implications, on the right to freedom of movement and to make practical recommendations. It also recommended the establishment: (a) of a forum on economic, social and cultural rights, to be called the Social Forum, to meet during its annual session, and (b) follow-up machinery on the question of the impunity of perpetrators of violations of economic, social and cultural rights; lastly, it recommended the establishment of a voluntary fund for the purpose of enabling representatives of minorities to participate in the work of the Working Group on Minorities.

## V. STUDIES, REPORTS AND NEW SUBJECTS

30. The Sub-Commission welcomed the final report on the relationships between the enjoyment of human rights and income distribution, submitted by Mr. José Bengoa (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/9 and E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/8), and the final report on systematic rape, sexual slavery and slavery-like practices during armed conflict submitted by Ms. Gay J. McDougall (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/13); Ms. McDougall was requested to update her report in the light of recent developments in this area.

31. Five studies are under way on the following subjects: traditional practices affecting the health of women and the girl child; systematic rape, sexual slavery and slavery-like practices during armed conflict: update on developments; treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements between States and indigenous populations; indigenous peoples and their relationship to land; human rights and terrorism.

32. The preparation and updating of the following working papers was entrusted to a number of experts during the fiftieth session: revised paper on the methods of work of the Sub-Commission; proposals for the work of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance; the rights of non-citizens; globalization in the context of the increase in incidents of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia; the realization of the right to education, including education in human rights; human rights as the primary objective of trade, investment and financial policy; the right to adequate food; reservations to human rights treaties;

observance of human rights by States not parties to United Nations human rights conventions. On the basis of these working papers, the Sub-Commission will decide at its next session whether a more in-depth study of some of the questions they deal with should be carried out by new special rapporteurs of the Sub-Commission. As in the past, all working documents are prepared by experts without financial implications.

33. The Sub-Commission recommended entrusting studies of the following issues to new special rapporteurs: the concept and practice of affirmative action (Mr. Marc Bossuyt); promotion of the realization of the right to drinking water supply and sanitation services (Mr. El-Hadji Guissé).

## VI. CHAIRMAN'S EVALUATION OF THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMISSION AT ITS FIFTIETH SESSION

34. As a result of the work of the Sub-Commission at its fiftieth session, it is possible to state that it is the only United Nations body where independent experts, United Nations agencies and representatives of Governments and of non-governmental organizations meet and conduct a constructive exchange of views on the promotion and protection of human rights; thus, the Sub-Commission is a human rights laboratory.

35. It should be emphasized that the Sub-Commission has kept up the pace of rationalization of its agenda, thus avoiding duplication of work and making it possible to pay particular attention to the priority matters relating to its mandate. For example, at its fiftieth session, the Sub-Commission took account of the idea that economic, social and cultural rights should be given greater weight in its agenda; in that regard, it proposed to the Commission on Human Rights, for the first time, the establishment of a working group to examine the effects of the activities of transnational corporations on individual and collective economic rights. It also proposed that the Commission should establish a social forum where it would be possible to examine the full range of ideas on economic, social and cultural rights. A number of study proposals have been submitted to the Sub-Commission, relating to economic rights such as the right to drinking water and sanitation services and the right to income distribution, a study on extreme poverty, etc. The Sub-Commission also adopted a resolution on the establishment of follow-up machinery on the question of the impunity of perpetrators of violations of economic, social and cultural rights. These issues deserve in-depth analysis, for the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights forms the very basis of the enjoyment of the other human rights, from which they are indivisible.

36. Emphasis has also been given to issues relating to racism, xenophobia and the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. It should be recalled that the Commission has asked the Sub-Commission to submit a series of proposals on these subjects in preparation for the World Conference against Racism. It is also important to note that the Sub-Commission's rationalization of its agenda has enabled it to make interesting and substantive links between problems relating to racism and xenophobia and issues regarding the rights of persons who are not nationals of the country where they live and of all migrant workers and members of their families and to globalization in the context of the increase in incidents of racism, racial

discrimination and xenophobia. The decision to appoint a special rapporteur to carry out a study on the concept and practice of affirmative action should allow richer and more in-depth discussion of these issues.

37. The part played by the Sub-Commission's working groups, both sessional and inter-sessional, is also worth highlighting. They make a significant contribution to the highly positive results of the Sub-Commission's work. As in the past, they have prepared important reports on issues relating to human rights and to the development of certain situations from a human rights perspective. The efforts made by these groups to achieve concrete results should be given support and encouragement. The Sub-Commission, with its achievements and its projects, has a duty to press on with its efforts to enhance the quality of its future work. One of the final observations of the document submitted to the Bureau of the Commission (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/38) states that the present mandate of the Sub-Commission is sufficiently broad and flexible to allow it to perform a constructive role, with the complexities of today's world, in the global quest for the promotion, protection and realization of all human rights. It is the Sub-Commission's task to continue its work within the framework of the mandate for which it was established, taking into account developments in the law, human rights law in particular.

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SPECIFIC GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS:
OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

# United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

## Note by the Secretariat

The present note supplements and updates as at 16 December 1998 the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the status of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery (A/53/339).

GE.99-10363 (E)

Introduction

1. The purpose of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/122 of 17 December 1991, is to assist representatives of non-governmental organizations from different regions dealing with issues of contemporary forms of slavery to participate in the deliberations of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, by providing them with financial assistance and by extending, through established channels of assistance, humanitarian, legal and financial aid to individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery.

2. The Fund is administered, in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, by the Secretary-General, assisted by a Board of Trustees composed of five individuals with experience in the field of human rights, in particular contemporary forms of slavery, who serve in their personal capacity for a three-year renewable term. The five members who have recently been renewed or appointed by the Secretary-General (from 1 January 1999 to 31 December 2001) are: Mr. Swami Agnivesh (India), Mr. Theo van Boven (Netherlands), Mr. Cheikh Saad-Bouh Kamara (Mauritania), Ms. Tatiana Matveeva (Russian Federation) and Mr. José de Souza Martins (Brazil).

3. The fourth session of the Board is scheduled to take place from 24 to 26 March 1999.

Financial situation of the Fund

4. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/122, funding is obtained by means of voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations and other private or public entities.

5. Upon recommendation of the Board of Trustees all the funds available in 1997 (US$ 23,850) have been spent for travel and project grants (see E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.2/1997/4, annex and A/53/339, para. 14).

6. At the invitation of the Bureau, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Swami Agnivesh, made a statement before the Commission at its fifty-third session: He stated that "in order for the Board to be able to ... respond to the requirements of a minimum number of applicants, we would need the very basic amount of US$ 100,000. Otherwise, the Board would not be in a position to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it".

7. As at 1 July 1998, the date on which the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly was drafted, the voluntary contributions paid to the Fund were not sufficient to allocate travel and project grants, nor to organize the fourth session of the Board of Trustees, which had to be postponed (A/53/339, para. 9).

8. In its resolution 1998/20, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities expressed its appreciation for the contributions made by donors to the Fund and urged all Governments, non-governmental organizations, other private and public entities and individuals to contribute annually in order to enable the Board of the Fund to fulfil its mandate effectively.

9. As the date of the drafting of the present report, 18 December 1998, the amount available for allocation by the Board of Trustees for travel or project grants in 1999 was approximately US$ 100,000. 1/

Contributions

10. The following contributions, were received from Governments as at 18 December 1998: 2/

| State | Amount in US$ | Paid in NY/GE | Paid on |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cyprus | 1 000 | GE | 12 May 1998 |
| France | 85 000 | GE | 4 Nov.1998 |
| Ireland | 29 600 | GE | 6 Nov.1998 |
| Kuwait | 25 000 | GE | 1 Sep.1998 |
| Turkey | 5 000 | GE | 20 Feb.1998 |
| United Kingdom | 8 465 | GE | 19 Oct.1998 |
| **TOTAL** | **154 065** | | |

11. The following contributions were received from non-governmental organizations and individuals as at 18 December 1998: 3/

| NGOs and individuals | Amount in US$ | Paid in NY/GE | Paid on |
|---|---|---|---|
| Istituto Tecnico Commerciale Romero Viale (Italy) | 940 | GE | 3 November 1998 |
| Mr. Sadiq M. Marafi | 675 | GE | 8 September 1998 |
| M.L.A.L. Movimiento Laici, Italy | 379 | GE | 27 October 1998 |
| Operazione Terzo Mondo, Italy | 2 000 | GE | 19 October 1998 |
| Mr. Yorio Shiokawa | 2 027 | GE | 21 September 1998 |
| Ms. Halima Warzazi | 503 | GE | 28 May 1998 |
| **TOTAL** | **6 525** | | |

12. The total amount of voluntary contributions received since the third session of the Board is therefore US$ 160 590.

Pledges

13. The following pledge is outstanding as at 18 December 1998:

| State | Amount in US$ | Pledge in NY/GE | Pledged on |
|---|---|---|---|
| Japan | 50 000 | NY | 4-5 Nov. 1998 |

14. In view of the new contributions received and available for disbursement, the Secretariat of the Fund and Board has started to disseminate application forms for both project and travel grants to non-governmental organizations who deal with contemporary forms of slavery, including those who had been selected previously but could not receive a grant due to lack of funds. About 80 applications have been sent to relevant NGOs that work on contemporary forms of slavery. About 100 application forms have also been disseminated by the Secretariat at the "Etats généraux des défenseurs des droits humains" (The Human Rights Defenders Summit) organized in Paris on 8 and 9 December 1998 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

15. Concerning travel grants, in accordance with previous recommendations of the Board and upon consultation with the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, priority will be given in 1999 to those non-governmental organizations who work on the following questions related to contemporary forms of slavery which appear in the agenda of the 1999 session of the Working Group and that will be discussed during that session: trans-border trafficking in persons, especially women and children; economic exploitation of domestic and migrant workers; bonded labour; child labour; forced labour; and sexual exploitation.

Human rights defender's prize awarded to a beneficiary of the Fund

16. A prize for the defence of human rights, named after Mr. Paul Gruninger, a Swiss citizen who assisted victims of the Second World War in seeking asylum in Switzerland, was awarded by the Administrative Council of the City of Geneva on 12 December 1998 to Ms. Anita Khadka recognizing and encouraging her work for the prevention of trans-border illicit trafficking of the girl child. In 1997 Ms. Khadka had received a travel grant from the Fund which allowed her to participate in the May 1998 session of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery and bring her testimony. At the session, Mr. Yokota, member of the Working Group, thanked Ms. Khadka and applauded her courage. He remarked that she had brought trans-border activity to the attention of the Working Group. The observer for India to the Working Group made a statement on the framework that had been put into place to protect women and children from commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking. The observer for Nepal expressed the need for international cooperation and support so that society was able to combat such exploitation (see A/53/339, para. 16 and E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/14, paras. 88 to 92).

17. The prize, consisting of a certificate and 30,000 Swiss francs, was given to Ms. Khadka by Mrs. Ruth Dreyfuss, President of the Swiss Confederation, at an official ceremony in Geneva. Authorities of the City of

Geneva and the Director of Forum 98 and of the World Organization Against Torture/SOS Torture, Mr. Eric Sottas, also took the floor and praised the courage and work of Ms. Khadka as a member of Maiti-Nepal, Ms. Khadka, a Nepalese citizen, at the age of 12 was promised a good job and marriage by a pimp, was then abducted, raped, tortured, arbitrarily detained in a brothel and forced into prostitution in another country.

18. Maiti-Nepal is a non-profit organization based in Kathmandu and present in other areas of the country where girl trafficking exists. The organization runs a rehabilitation centre and shelters for young girls. It provides education, counselling in personal health care and disease prevention and job training to women, including former prostitute children, to help them become financially self-sustainable by teaching them income-generating skills and providing them with small business loans. Maiti-Nepal also educates the general public, public officials, politicians, students and the media about girl trafficking and child prostitution and mobilizes concerned citizens against these practices. Maiti's prevention centres also welcome girls who are at high risk of being trafficked. The aim of the organization is not necessarily to send these girls back home to their guardians, who are often the very people who originally sold them or abandoned them on the streets, but to provide them with a safe place to live, find a sponsor for their education and improve their health.

How to contribute to the Fund

19. Contributions to the Fund can be made by payment to: The United Nations Geneva General Fund c/o UBS AG, P.O. Box 2770 CH-1211 Geneva 2:

- in US$: c/o UBS AG New York,
  Acc. C0-590-160.1,
  Swift address: SBCOUS33; or

- in CHF: c/o UBS AG,
  P.O. Box 2770,
  CH-1211 Geneva 2,
  Acc. C0-590-160.0,
  Swift address: SBCOCHGG12A

20. Contributions can also be made by cheque to the Cashier's Office, United Nations, New York N.Y, NY 10017, United States of America, or Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.

21. In any case, please make payment to the order of the "United Nations" and "For the UN Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, account SH".

Note

1/ According to information available at OHCHR and taking into consideration the obligation to deduct 15 per cent for the operating cash reserve and 13 per cent for programme support costs.

2/ According to Official Receipt Vouchers available at OHCHR.

3/ Ibid.

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# PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS: INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

## Public information activities in the field of human rights, including the World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights

## Report of the Secretary-General

GE.99-10780 (E)

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## Introduction

1. In its resolution 1997/41, the Commission on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission, at its fifty-fifth session, a report on public information activities, with special emphasis on the activities relating to the World Public Information Campaign and those for the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including information on expenditures incurred in the biennium 1996-1997 and those envisaged for the biennium 1998-1999.

2. The World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights was launched by the General Assembly in its resolution 43/128 of 8 December 1988, with the objectives of increasing understanding and awareness of human rights and fundamental freedoms and educating the public on the international machinery available for the promotion and protection of those rights and freedoms and the efforts of the United Nations to realize them.

3. The coordination of the United Nations education and public information programmes in the field of human rights was specifically mentioned in General Assembly resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993, as part of the mandate of the post of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The High Commissioner for Human Rights has repeatedly stressed the importance she attaches to the implementation of activities for increasing the awareness of human rights among the general public.

4. The budget for the 1998-1999 biennium for external printing publications and for the upgrading of the Internet site is US$ 230,700. The publications programme of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is expanding to respond to the increasing need for human rights information.

5. The present report supplements information and estimates provided in the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly (A/53/313).

## I. PUBLIC INFORMATION ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

### A. Publications programme

6. In its resolution 1997/41, the Commission on Human Rights urged OHCHR, in cooperation with the Department of Public Information, to cooperate closely in the realization of the information and publication programmes in the field of human rights, including the implementation of the new information strategy and the relevant preparatory work for the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

7. In keeping with that directive, OHCHR has continued its efforts to streamline and focus its publications programme. Accordingly, the ad hoc Publications Board, established in November 1996 has continued its work with regard to management of publications.

8. Since the last report (E/CN.4/1997/36), OHCHR has received around 5,000 letters from individuals, Governments, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and other human rights institutions requesting

human rights publications. According to a rough estimate, during 1998 the Office has distributed more than 30,000 copies of human rights publications, in addition to the 3,000 copies of each publication which are distributed by the Distribution Section at the United Nations Office at Geneva through the mailing list established by OHCHR.

9. OHCHR also contributed substantially during the reporting period to the preparation and revision of general United Nations publications, such as Human Rights: Questions and Answers and Human Rights Today - A United Nations Priority.

### 1. Fact Sheet Series

10. The Fact Sheet Series consists of booklets directed at a non-specialized audience, addressing various aspects of United Nations activities in the field of human rights, including international mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights, or specific human rights issues. Fact Sheets are published in the six official languages of the United Nations and distributed worldwide free of charge. The complete list of Fact Sheets is contained in the annex.

11. OHCHR is currently downloading the whole text of all Fact Sheets in the Office's home page on the Internet. This development will enhance the wide dissemination of these publications, while contributing to reduce print runs and rationalize expenses.

### 2. Professional Training Series

12. An important teaching and educational tool is the established Professional Training Series, designed primarily to provide support to the training activities of the programme of advisory services and technical assistance of OHCHR, as well as to assist other organizations involved in human rights education for professional groups. The complete list of Professional Training Series publications is contained in the annex.

13. During the period under review a new handbook, *Human Rights and Law: A Manual on Human Rights Training for the Police*, No. 5 in the series, has been published in French, English and Spanish. The Pocket Guide, *International Human Rights Standards for Law Enforcement: A Pocket Book on Human Rights for the Police*, No. 5/Add.1, has been published in French, English and Spanish. Given the policy of the Conference Services Division at UNOG regarding translations of publications, translations have been funded, whenever possible, against the Voluntary Funds for Technical Cooperation, in the framework of specific country projects. Translations in Arabic, Chinese and Russian are, unfortunately, delayed due to the lack of funding.

### 3. Human Rights Study Series

14. The Human Rights Study Series reproduces studies and reports on important human rights issues prepared by experts of the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. Ten studies in the series have been published so far (see annex).

15. Since the last report to the General Assembly, No. 9 in the series, *Compilation and Analysis of Legal Norms Applicable to Internally Displaced Persons* has been published. Given the policy of the Conference Services Division at UNOG this issue will for the time being be published in English only.

### 4. Notes of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

16 Since the last report to the Commission on Human Rights, and in an effort to streamline and focus the publications programme of the Office, the OHCHR ad hoc Publications Board decided to discontinue the series of Notes of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the content of which was overlapping with the Fact Sheet Series.

### 5. 1998: Fiftieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights basic information kits

17. The series of basic information kits was conceived as working tools for agencies, programmes, non-governmental organizations and national institutions, as well as individuals, in the framework of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Basic information kits were published in French, English and Spanish and distributed free of charge. The complete list of basic information kits is contained in the annex.

18. Since the last report to the General Assembly, the basic information kit No. 4, *Human Rights Education: Lessons for Life*, has been published in English and is currently being translated into French and Spanish.

### 6. Ad hoc publications

19. Ad hoc publications consist mainly of reports and proceedings of conferences, workshops and other events held under the auspices of OHCHR. There are now 17 titles in the series (see annex).

20. Since the last report to the General Assembly, the volume entitled *United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004): Lessons for Life* is being printed in English and being translated into the other official languages.

### 7. Reference material

21. The reference publications of OHCHR, which are United Nations sales publications, are directed at a more specialized audience. The complete list of reference material is contained in the annex. Since the last report to the General Assembly no such issue has been published.

### 8. Periodicals

22. Since the last report to the Commission on Human Rights, a new 32-page professional quarterly review of the Office of the High Commissioner, entitled

*Human Rights*, has been produced. The magazine reflects the full breadth of the human rights concerns of the Office: civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, as well as the right to development. The articles, written in English and in French, cover the various aspects of the work of the Office, including the activities of the High Commissioner, treaty bodies, special procedures, field offices, technical cooperation, research and information. The quarterly is printed in 13,000 copies and distributed throughout the world free of charge. So far, issues No. 1 (Winter 1997/1998), No. 2 (Spring 1998) and No. 3 (Summer 1998) have been published. Issue No. 4 (Fall 1998) is being printed.

### 9. Promotional materials

23. A 12-page brochure, *OHCHR Facts and Figures*, and a folder are under preparation.

## B. Use of electronic means

24. Since the last report to the Commission, significant achievements have been made in the publishing of documents and other information on the OHCHR Website as well as internal information systems. Following the launch of the Website on 10 December 1996 (www.unhchr.ch), it may be of interest to note that the Website's average use has increased from 1,000 to 14,000 user sessions a week. Moreover, in October and November 1998 more than 1 million documents per month were accessed. In December 1997 the French and Spanish versions of the Website were launched. Furthermore, in December 1998, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a collection of more than 250 language versions of the Declaration was inaugurated.

25. Additionally, four databases have been established. The Treaty Bodies Database is now operational with a total of 14,000 records and full-text documents are available for public access. The Charter-Based Bodies Database has been designed as a system to replace, to a large extent, the old Web representation in order to facilitate the retrieval of documents and to reduce maintenance costs. At present, it contains 6,000 documents in English, French and Spanish. The Press and Statements Databases serve internally as the Office's archive of news and highlight new developments in the field of human rights.

26. It is also worthwhile mentioning that in order to improve the sharing and retrieval of incoming correspondence, a digital registry has been established internally and is in the final stage of testing. All staff members have received training on this system and thus all incoming mail is now being scanned and distributed electronically.

27. The design structures for each of the above-mentioned databases were developed for internal and external use for ease of access and data consistency. The design structures are further refined and adapted according to users' needs.

## C. External relations programme

### 1. Briefings

28. OHCHR regularly organizes briefings on United Nations activities in the field of human rights and on specific human rights issues for students, diplomats, journalists, public officials, academics, professors and non-governmental organizations. It also provides lecturers for briefings organized by the Department of Public Information. More than 60 such briefings were delivered by officers of the Office since the last report to the General Assembly.

### 2. Exhibitions and human rights observances

29. Since the last report to the General Assembly, OHCHR participated in the Open House Day organized at the Palais des Nations on 18 October 1998 as part of the activities to commemorate United Nations Day and the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The High Commissioner for Human Rights participated in a round table on the role of Switzerland and the United Nations, while OHCHR displayed stands with its main publications. All during the day, OHCHR staff gave brief lessons on the Universal Declaration; read fairy tales on the Universal Declaration to children; participated in a one-hour debate on trafficking of women and children; and briefed 260 Swiss students coming from the 26 cantons on various aspects of OHCHR's activities.

30. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, OHCHR organized a series of activities in the Palais Wilson. A videolink was established with New York to broadcast live the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary with statements by the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as the award ceremony of the United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights. The exhibit Human Rights Awardees was inaugurated to honour past and present winners of the Prize: it consisted of 42 panels, one for each recipient, presenting the laureate through biographical information and photographs.

31. Also on 10 December 1998, OHCHR collaborated with the Department of Public Information in the organization of a number of activities in the Palais des Nations, in particular an exhibition of paintings by William Wilson illustrating the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

32. As a follow-up to the drawing competition on human rights for children 4 to 12 years old launched in August 1998, on the occasion of the Fête de Genève, all participants were invited to the Palais Wilson on 11 December 1998 for an informal ceremony. All the drawings were on display; winners were given various United Nations human rights items and all participants received a book for children on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The children also met with various members of the Secretariat.

### 3. Fellowship programme

33. The General Assembly made direct provision for the human rights fellowship programme in its resolution 926 (X) of 14 December 1955. Under the terms of that resolution, assistance provided by the Secretary-General is to be rendered in agreement with Governments on the basis of their requests. Fellowships are awarded only to candidates nominated by their Governments, and are financed under the regular budget for advisory services.

34. The system of periodic reporting established within the context of all major international human rights instruments is the central element in monitoring full and effective national implementation of international human rights standards. In order to strengthen States parties' national capacity to submit reports to treaty monitoring bodies, OHCHR is offering fellowships to governmental and non-governmental officials and representatives.

35. In 1998, the fellowship training activity was carried out from 26 October to 6 November at the premises of the United Nations Staff College Programme in Turin, Italy. Twenty-six participants attended the activity from the following 14 countries: Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, China, Gambia, Georgia, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Latvia, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zambia.

### 4. Internship programme

36. During the reporting period, OHCHR offered internships to graduate students to enable them to gain first-hand knowledge of United Nations actions and procedures in the field of human rights, through active participation in the work of the Office under the direct supervision of its staff members. Interns are placed according to the needs of Office and to their area of interest.

37. Internships are awarded without financial commitment of any kind on the part of OHCHR or the United Nations bodies. The need for funding interns from developing countries is an important priority for the Office.

### 5. Training courses and other technical cooperation activities with a public information element

38. An account of the training courses, seminars and workshops organized by OHCHR is given in the report of the Secretary-General to the Commission on Human Rights on technical cooperation in the field of human rights (E/CN.4/1999/99).

## D. Coordination and cooperation within and outside the United Nations

### 1. Inter-agency cooperation

39. In keeping with General Assembly resolution 52/117 and Commission on Human Rights resolution 1997/35 requesting the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to coordinate within the

United Nations system the preparation for the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, OHCHR convened during 1998 in Geneva nine inter-agency meetings. These meetings allowed participants to review joint projects and to exchange information on a number of ongoing activities carried out by the respective organizations in the framework of the anniversary. They also provided an opportunity to identify further forms of cooperation between OHCHR and the organizations concerned. Information, documentation and human rights education were the main items on the agenda of these meetings.

40. In implementing its publications programme, OHCHR cooperates with other bodies and organizations as well as with non-governmental organizations. An example of this cooperation was the series "1998: 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - basic information kits". In each issue of the series, a special section was devoted to contributions from United Nations agencies and programmes.

### 2. Non-governmental organizations

41. Non-governmental organizations continue to cooperate actively with the United Nations bodies dealing with human rights, providing them with information and expertise. They also contribute effectively to the implementation of the activities of the World Campaign, especially in the areas of information, education and dissemination of United Nations materials and publications. The General Assembly made reference to the valuable action of non-governmental organizations in its resolution 52/127 in which it requested the Secretary-General to take advantage, as much as possible, of the collaboration of non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights, including in the dissemination of human rights materials.

42. During the reporting period OHCHR received correspondence from non-governmental organizations throughout the world, requesting publications, information and participation by the Office in various events (seminars, workshops, conferences and celebrations).

### 3. Academic and research institutions

43. OHCHR regularly cooperates with the International Institute for Human Rights at Strasbourg, France; the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights; the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights at San José; the International Institute of Humanitarian Law at San Remo, Italy; the International Institute of Higher Studies in Criminal Sciences, at Siracusa, Italy; the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law at Lund, Sweden; the Graduate Institute of International Studies at Geneva; the Arab Institute for Human Rights at Tunis; the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights at Banjul, and similar institutions worldwide.

## II. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

44. The Department of Public Information (DPI) continued to initiate and coordinate activities within the framework of the World Public Information Campaign and the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004,

which also coincided with the observance period of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Department's multimedia approach strives to ensure effective coverage of United Nations human rights activities, as well as worldwide distribution of relevant human rights information materials. This work is also being carried out within the framework of three other ongoing decades: the Third Decade for the Elimination of Racism and Racial Discrimination, 1993-2003; the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, 1995-2004; and the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, 1997-2006.

45. The Department continues to have a mandate under the thematic heading of human rights, but also carries out other mandated programmes in such related areas as social, cultural and economic rights, the rights of specific groups, and other major issues such as the question of Palestine, decolonization, the advancement of women, and the International Criminal Court. The Department's related activities are reported to the General Assembly and to other intergovernmental bodies under each specific area or issue.

46. The multimedia approach of the Department includes the production of print materials - from brochures to backgrounders, posters and media. These materials are produced in a variety of languages, mainly through the network of 68 United Nations information centres and services and the eight United Nations Offices throughout the world. The material is also disseminated electronically and is available on the Internet on the United Nations home page in English, French and Spanish. The multimedia approach also entails radio and television programmes; press conferences, press briefings and special events; exhibits; special media outreach activities; activities with educational organizations and non-governmental organizations; and public services for visitors and queries.

47. During the period January 1997 to December 1998, the Department actively pursued its information campaign on human rights issues. Because of the great demand for publications, the Department printed or reprinted and widely disseminated, *inter alia*:

(a) Booklets: *United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance* (DPI/1709), in English (20,000), French (15,000) and Spanish (15,000) in March 1997; *UN Declaration and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (DPI/858/Rev.1), in English (15,000) in June 1997; *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (DPI/1101/Rev.1), reprinted in English (20,000) in November 1998; and *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children* (DPI/1834), in French (3,000) and Spanish (2,000) in February 1997 with reprint in English (5,000) in August 1998;

(b) Posters: *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (DPI/1653), poster/brochure reprint in English (15,000), French (8,000) and Spanish (8,000) released in February 1997 and in Arabic (5,000), Russian (5,000) and Chinese (3,000) in September 1997; *International Decade of the World's Indigenous People* (DPI/1813), released in English (21,000), French (10,000) and Spanish (10,000) in September 1997; *Universal Declaration of Human Rights 50th Anniversary* (DPI/1900), multilingual poster (70,000) released in September 1997 and reprinted (70,000) in May 1998;

(c) Other materials: *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (DPI/876/Rev.2), passbook reprint released in English (180,000), French (60,000), Spanish (80,000), Arabic (30,000) and Russian (30,000) in August 1998; *Human Rights 50th Anniversary logo reproduction sheet* (DPI/1928), released in English (20,000) in September 1997; and reprinted (15,000) in March 1998; *Human Rights 50th Anniversary text reproduction sheet* (DPI/1929), released (multilingual) in September 1997 (20,000); and reprinted (15,000) in March 1998; *UDHR 50th Anniversary press kit cover* (DPI/1937) released in English (10,000) and French (5,000) in December 1997.

48. To raise awareness of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Department released an interim and then final press kit which contained the following backgrounders, all produced in English (20,000) and French (10,000) and made available in Spanish on Internet; *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A Magna Carta for All Humanity* (DPI/1937/A); *Indigenous People: Challenges facing the international community* (DPI/1937/B); *Human Rights in Action: Monitoring Compliance through Treaty Bodies and Special Rapporteurs* (DPI/1937/C); *Mary Robinson Biographical Note* (DPI/1937/D); *Speech of Ms. Mary Robinson: Realizing Human Rights: "Taking hold of it boldly and duly"* (DPI/1937/E); *The Right to Development* (DPI/1937/F); *UDHR Illuminates Global Pluralism, SG Speech at Tehran University* (DPI/1937/G), all of the above released in March 1998; *Human Rights in Action: Field Operations* (DPI/1937/H),); *UN Action to Combat Intolerance and Racism* (DPI/1937/I); *Education: A Tool for the Elimination of Human Rights Violations* (DPI/1937/J), all published in November 1998; and *Human Rights Defenders - the front line struggle for human rights*, produced in English (2,000) in December 1998. A quiz game to test students' knowledge of human rights and entitled *The UN at your fingertips: questions and answers* (DPI/1940) was released in English (20,000) in August 1998, with the French version available on the United Nations Website; A *UDHR 50th Anniversary bookmark* (DPI/1945) was printed in English/French (25,000) in February 1998, and reprinted (30,000) in November 1998; A *UDHR 50th Anniversary brochure* (DPI/1967) based on the 1997 DPI Exhibit on the Declaration was produced in English (25,000) in August 1998, and French (10,000) and Spanish (5,000) in October 1998, English reprint (20,000) in November 1998; and a Human Rights fact sheet, *Fifty Years of Human Rights*, in English.

49. The Department also produced print materials to raise awareness of related issues, including women's rights. These included brochures, special press releases, booklets and factsheets.

50. For the United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court which took place in Rome from 15 June to 17 July 1998, the Department produced a press kit with the following materials: *International Criminal Court (ICC) Logo Reproduction Sheet* (DPI/1951), in English (20,000) and *International Criminal Court (ICC) Text Reproduction Sheet* (DPI/1952), in multilingual (20,000), both releaased in March 1998; *International Criminal Court Poster* (DPI/1958), multilingual (30,000) in May 1998; A press kit cover (DPI/1960), in English (5,000) and French (3,000) in May 1998 with the following backgrounders and inserts produced in English (10,000) and French (5,000) and made available in Spanish on the Internet: *Crimes within the Court's Jurisdiction* (DPI/1960/A), *Trigger Mechanisms and the Exercise of the Court's Jurisdiction* (DPI/1960/B), *Bringing*

*Justice to the Victims* (DPI/1960/C), *The Draft Statute* (DPI/1960/D), and *International Criminal Court brochure* (DPI/1969), all printed in May 1998; *Information for Media* (DPI/1960/E), *Media Advisory: UN to Establish an International Criminal Court* (DPI/1960/F), and *Hans Corell Biography* (DPI/1960/G), all released in June 1998. UNIC Rome translated the entire contents of the media kit for national dissemination.

51. Further to its efforts to mainstream human rights, DPI also produced a backgrounder on *Families: Educators and Providers of Human Rights* (DPI/1980) in English in April 1998. A backgrounder entitled *Poverty: An Obstacle to Human Rights* (DPI/2015) was produced in English. Both were widely disseminated.

52. These print materials, as well as DPI press releases on United Nations meetings and documents, were distributed electronically to the network of information centres and services in addition to being posted on the United Nations Website on the Internet. From January 1997 to December 1998, some 400 DPI press releases on human rights issues were distributed in English and French. In addition, the Department reissued at Headquarters the UNIS Geneva press releases on the Commission on Human Rights, the treaty bodies and the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in order to ensure wide dissemination. All these press releases were also posted on the United Nations home page which, as of December 1998, averaged 2,840,000 hits per week.

53. The Department of Public Information, with the assistance of several United Nations information centres, undertook a special project to have pro bono advertisements for the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration placed in airline in-flight magazines. The material provided to these magazines included archival photographs, the text of the Universal Declaration, graphics of the logo and slogan for the fiftieth anniversary and other background information. Eight magazines responded to this initiative. Air France produced a special edition on the fiftieth anniversary and the following airlines included articles, graphics or photographs: Aeromexico, Air Canada, British Airways, Lan Chile, Middle East Airlines, Qantas Airways and Virgin Atlantic.

54. The *Yearbook of the United Nations*, published each year by the Department, devotes a separate three-chapter section to all aspects of human rights. The chapters highlight the work of the Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission, and discuss in detail the implementation of all important human rights conventions. In addition, the *Yearbook* summarizes the reports of the United Nations special rapporteurs.

55. The second edition in the DPI publication series *UN Briefing Papers*, which was devoted to United Nations work in the area of human rights and entitled "Human Rights Today: A United Nations Priority" (DPI/1998), was released in October 1998 in English, French and Spanish in print and electronic versions. The new edition of the reference book *Basic Facts About the United Nations*, published in English in September 1998, contained a revised chapter on human rights that included the human rights dimension of United Nations activities in the areas of peace and security, development and

humanitarian assistance. The revised editions of *UN in Brief and Image and Reality* continued to include updated material on United Nations human rights activities.

56. The DPI publication, *Africa Recovery*, published a total of 25 articles pertaining to human rights in Africa. In addition, it published a briefing paper, *Women in Africa's Development*, which looked at obstacles, including human rights issues, affecting women in Africa.

57. The DPI publication, *UN Chronicle*, featured a number of articles devoted to human rights, among them: articles relating to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance; essays by Mary Robinson and Jose Ayala-Lasso, former High Commissioner for Human Rights; a special section on violence against women; an article on a United Nations report on the death penalty issue; and an article by Joaquim Chissano, President of Mozambique.

58. In the context of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration, four Nobel Laureates - Nadine Gordimer, John C. Polanyi, M. N. Perutz and Desmond Tutu - contributed essays to *UN Chronicle*. In addition, there were articles by Dimitru Mazilu, former Vice-President of Romania; Thomas Hammarberg, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for human rights in Cambodia; Judge C. F. Amerasinghe, member of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal; and Francesco Paolo Fulci, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations. The publication now carries a regular "Rights Watch" section.

59. The Dag Hammarskjold Library (DHL) carried out various activities on human rights, *inter alia*: (a) a Human Rights site was posted on the Intranet (Cyberlinks), which lists selected United Nations and non-United Nations Websites; (b) a special training course entitled "Human Rights: resources on the World Wide Web" was designed and added to DHL's training programme; and (c) DHL requested its network of depository libraries to organize activities to mark the fiftieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration and Human Rights Day.

60. As a part of the system-wide efforts to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration, the DPI Sales and Marketing Section also undertook various activities. The efforts, in particular, focused on the production of information resources aimed at making accessible human rights-related books, electronic products and other information resources, and the development of a line of commemorative gift items. Two human rights publication catalogues were produced, containing selected books and electronic products intended to illuminate the key aspects of human rights in relation to international law, the United Nations common system, Governments and non-governmental organizations. The catalogues were widely distributed to libraries, academics, lawyers, NGOs and government officials. English and French versions of the catalogue were produced by the Geneva and New York sales offices.

61. The DPI CyberSchoolBus expanded its role significantly by linking to the live webcast of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal

Declaration, thereby providing access to young learners across the globe. This was in addition to another ongoing human rights project of collecting stories from young human rights activists from around the world.

62. UNTV activities relating to human rights included: (a) sending historical archival material and a fiftieth anniversary public service announcement (PSA) via satellite to international television organizations and national broadcasters in December 1997; (b) distributing a 30-second and a 60-second PSA, produced in collaboration with Bozell Advertising in New York, in all official languages in December 1998; (c) providing and distributing statements by the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

63. *World Chronicle* TV programmes dealt with specific aspects of human rights, such as children's rights, women's rights, and the right to development. A TV discussion programme featuring the High Commissioner for Human Rights was taped in New York in October 1998 and cablecast in the United States and six other countries. The UNTV series in five languages, "UN in Action", which is distributed to broadcasters in more than 100 countries and is shown on the weekly programme "CNN World Report", also focused on human rights stories. A compilation of UNTV human rights stories won the Intercom Silver Plaque Award in 1998 at the prestigious Chicago International Film Festival. A feature documentary on the origins and development of the Universal Declaration, "For Everyone, Everywhere", was completed and distributed by UNTV in October 1998 for use by broadcasters for fiftieth anniversary events. The documentary, which is narrated in English by Harrison Ford and in French by Isabelle Huppert, is available in all six official languages. It has already been transmitted by a number of major broadcasting organizations. The DPI "Year in Review", a video produced at the end of each year to highlight United Nations activities, included human rights issues. It is produced in six language versions and seen in over 150 countries.

64. UN Radio covered all aspects of human rights and related issues in its news bulletin, current affairs magazine and regional magazine programmes. In addition, it produced 33 feature programmes exclusively devoted to the question of human rights, in English, Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian, French, French-Creole, Kiswahili, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Turkish.

65. UN Radio also organized and hosted two live 30-minute worldwide radio broadcasts with the High Commissioner, one in 1997 and another in 1998. Ms. Robinson fielded questions on a range of human rights issues from journalists at 10 radio networks around the world. The shows were broadcast on five continents and also posted on the Internet. In addition, UN Radio also produced a special series of 10 featurettes in English exploring major population issues in the light of human rights.

66. Special events to observe international days or years were another way of promoting human rights issues. These were organized by the Department at Headquarters, and the United Nations information centres and services undertook such activities at the national and local levels. The special

events included, among others, International Day of the World's Indigenous People (9 August), International Women's Day (8 March), International Day of Tolerance (16 November), and Human Rights Day (10 December).

67. For example, on 5 March 1998, DPI organized a commemoration of International Women's Day on the topic "Women and Human Rights". Featured speakers included the High Commissioner, who presented the keynote address; Louise Fréchette, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General; Angela King, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women; Musimbi Kanyoro, General Secretary of the World Young Women's Christian Association; and Patricia Flor, Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women.

68. In preparation for United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, which was observed for the first time on 26 June 1998, the Department produced a two-page information sheet, which was distributed to journalists and through United Nations information offices. At Headquarters, DPI coordinated a press conference featuring Wally Bacre Ndiaye, the head of the New York office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Dr. Allen Keller of the Bellevue/New York University Program for Torture Survivors. DPI also helped to organize an exhibit at Headquarters, co-sponsored by the Office of the High Commissioner and the International Council for the Rehabilitation of Torture Victims. The exhibit was opened by Mr. Ndiaye and Ambassador Jorgen Bojer of the Permanent Mission of Denmark.

69. For the International Day of the World's Indigenous People, indigenous people from around the world gathered at Headquarters on 5 and 6 August 1998 to participate in special events. On 5 August, messages from the Secretary-General and from the High Commissioner were read, and a sacred pipe ceremony was conducted by Arvol Looking Horse, the nineteenth-generation "Keeper of the Sacred Buffalo Calf Pipe" of the Lakota people. Panel discussions on the theme of education and language as well as a workshop focusing on human rights programmes and reporting mechanisms then took place.

### A. Launch of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

70. Three events were held on the occasion of Human Rights Day in 1997 to launch the fiftieth anniversary. The DPI International Journalists Roundtable on Human Rights, held on 8 and 9 December, consisted of four panel discussions on the topics of the media and human rights, human rights in action, the right to development, and women and children's rights. Journalists from around the world and media in the New York area participated. The keynote address was given by Fareed Zakaria, managing editor of *Foreign Affairs*. Other speakers included Philip Alston, Chairman of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Ilene Cohn, Visiting Human Rights Fellow at Harvard University and former United Nations human rights monitor in El Salvador and Guatemala; and Colin Granderson, Executive Director of the United Nations Human Rights Mission in Haiti.

71. The official launch of the anniversary, held in the ECOSOC Chamber, featured Hillary Rodham Clinton, First Lady of the United States of America; Philip Alston; Nafis Sadik, Executive Secretary of the United Nations

Population Fund; Ambassador Kamalesh Sharma, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations; Wole Soyinka, Nobel Prize Laureate for Literature; and Olara Otunnu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the impact of armed conflict on children.

72. Also on that occasion, DPI held a special event involving students and teachers at United Nations Headquarters. In this interactive event, each participating school made a formal presentation on human rights in the form of a group essay or a speech. For the first time, DPI invited schools in the United States to such an observance.

73. A photographic exhibit to commemorate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was designed by DPI and displayed at Headquarters from December 1997 through March 1998. The exhibit then travelled to Geneva for the Commission on Human Rights from mid-March through April. A portion of the exhibit was then on display in Ottawa, Canada, before it travelled to Washington, D.C., and Ramapo College in New Jersey. An expanded exhibition was displayed at Headquarters on 10 December 1998. A collection of Human Rights lithographs, presented to the Secretary-General by the King of Spain in 1984, travelled to four locations in Europe in 1998, with the design assistance and organizational support of DPI. In order to promote public awareness of human rights, the Department also designed billboards on the Universal Declaration for airports in New York City and San Francisco.

74. The Department, in cooperation with the Executive Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations associated with DPI, held its fifty-first annual DPI/NGO conference at Headquarters from 14 to 16 September 1998. The theme of the Conference was "The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: From Words to Deeds". The three-day event focused on the impact which the Declaration has had on societies around the world. Panel discussions addressed an overview of human rights issues and the universality of human rights, the impact of globalization on development, cross-border issues, building and strengthening human rights institutions, the relationship between human rights and peace, and human rights education. A total of 1,800 NGO representatives attended.

75. In its outreach activities, particularly as they relate to students and educators, the Department has consistently promoted a better understanding and knowledge about human rights. The Universal Declaration was reissued with a parallel read-easy version and classroom exercises. Two new publications produced specifically for students at intermediate and secondary levels, *This is the United Nations* (DPI/1938) and *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About the United Nations* (DPI/1888), also extensively covered human rights issues. Extracts from *Teaching About Human Rights*, a DPI teaching manual, was also reissued for use by teachers. Each month, DPI forwarded several hundred information packets to teachers which included the Universal Declaration and other human rights-related material.

76. The Department, in association with various partners within the United Nations and outside, arranged several workshops for teachers. In 1998, this was done under an arrangement with the United Federation of Teachers and the New York City Board of Education. On 11 December 1998, about 350 students and 220 observers attended a Student Conference on Human Rights, which was

organized by DPI in association with the New York City Board of Education, the United Nations Association of the United States, UNA-USA, the International Bridges Project, Global Education Motivators, ASPnet/USA, and Lift Every Voice, Inc. Student delegates came from 125 schools in the United States as well as Argentina, Belgium, Mexico, the Russian Federation and Sweden. The delegates drafted and adopted their own declaration.

77. During the reporting period, DPI arranged a total of 79 briefings for 5,893 participants on issues related to human rights. United Nations senior officials, including representatives of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, addressed students, teachers and NGOs. In addition, DPI arranged 11 outside speaking engagements with 1,683 participants. It handled 8,507 inquiries on human rights from the public. It was noted that a growing number of queries are from students and more are being received through e-mail. Human rights issues continued to be covered in the Headquarters guided tours. With illustrated versions of the Universal Declaration on display, visitors learn from professional guides about the role of the United Nations in promoting and protecting human rights. An estimated 450,000 people visit United Nations Headquarters each year.

B. Activities at Headquarters for the fiftieth anniversary, 10 December 1998

78. Events at Headquarters on 10 December 1998 were numerous and varied, several requiring close cooperation between the Department of Public Information, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator and Buildings Maintenance Service and the Office the Assistant Secretary-General for External Affairs.

79. The Human Rights Film Festival, organized by the International Council of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS) in cooperation with the Department of Public Information, included screenings of documentaries in the Dag Hamarskjold Library Auditorium on 3, 4, 7 and 9 December. The premiere of the DPI documentary, "For Everyone, Everywhere", containing archival footage on the history of the Universal Declaration, took place on 7 December. Each documentary was followed by a panel discussion.

80. The 1998 Human Rights Prize ceremony took place in the General Assembly in the presence of the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner. The Department, in cooperation with OHCHR, organized a press conference for the Human Rights awardees immediately afterwards.

81. The Secretary-General officially opened the DPI Human Rights Exhibit on Human Rights Day. As mentioned previously, an initial portion of the exhibit was first displayed in 1997, with various parts of it displayed around the world during the year. The expanded exhibit included additional panels, several with information on all Human Rights Prize awardees since 1968. The President of the General Assembly and the five 1998 Human Rights Prizes recipients were among the guests present.

82. Another event co-sponsored by DPI and OHCHR featured three Messengers of Peace: Luciano Pavarotti, Michael Douglas and Anna Cataldi. They presented

the Secretary-General with the children's passport version of the Universal Declaration, which they then distributed to visiting children. This version, designed by Giorgio Baravalle and printed by Cairopubblicità (Milan, Italy), will eventually be reproduced in all 260 languages of the Universal Declaration.

83. A special event, co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of San Marino, the OHCHR and DPI, was organized to launch the United Nations Website. The event, moderated by the Assistant Secretary-General for External Relations, opened with remarks by the Secretary-General. Other speakers included the President of the General Assembly and the Minister of Foreign and Political Affairs of San Marino. The launch of the Website was followed by a reception hosted by the Republic of San Marino.

84. An evening recital in the General Assembly Hall featured two famous performers, Luciano Pavarotti and Wynton Marsalis, as the highlight of the Day. A reading of the articles of the Universal Declaration by several teenagers was interspersed throughout the programme.

### C. Activities of United Nations Information Centres and Services

#### UNIS Geneva

85. The United Nations Information Service at Geneva continued to play a special role in the promotion of the work of the United Nations concerning human rights, especially the activities of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Service provided sustained and in-depth support to all aspects of the work of the High Commissioner and the United Nations human rights programme, including press release coverage of treaty bodies at Geneva, the Commission on Human Rights, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and other human rights activities; regular briefings of the Geneva-based press; information support to the field; acting as Geneva spokesperson for the High Commissioner and the human rights programme; and briefings for Geneva-based NGOs, among others.

86. During the reporting period, the Service produced a total of 1,679 press releases on human rights, 866 in English and 813 in French. In addition, the Service reissued press releases from DPI at Headquarters relating to human rights, including the Secretary-General's statements. UNIS Geneva press releases are distributed to 250 correspondents of the UNOG press corps and posted on the United Nations Website.

87. In 1997/98, UNIS Geneva collaborated with the Internet team of OHCHR to ensure that press releases of both the Commission and the Sub-Commission were available with links on its site. This proved valuable to journalists, students and NGOs, among others. The Service also launched its own home page in English and French, which gives prominence to human rights developments.

88. During the reporting period, 99 press conferences were held on human rights issues, four of them by the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Most of the press conferences were given by the special rapporteurs during the Commission on Human Rights.

89. In its television (115 outputs) and radio (162 outputs) programmes, UNIS Geneva also covered the Commission, Sub-commission and press conferences given by the High Commissioner, human rights experts, and government representatives for, *inter alia*, Associated Press/World Television News, Reuters Television and CNN. It liaised with visiting television crews and provided satellite transmission services. Through the European Broadcasting Union, UNTV coverage was distributed to television stations throughout the world, including 30 items on the Commission's fifty-third session in 1997 and 42 items on its fifty-fourth session in 1998.

90. During the 1997 sessions of the Commission and the Sub-Commission, UNIS Geneva organized 37 NGO briefings by special rapporteurs and experts. In 1998, it organized its annual DPI/NGO conference on the theme "Education and Human Rights: from Words to Deeds". More than 200 NGOs were invited. The event also included a live telecast of the same event held simultaneously at Headquarters.

91. UNIS worked in close consultation with OHCHR to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human RIghts. On Human Rights Day 1997, UNIS inaugurated a "Human Rights Corner" to draw attention to the fiftieth anniversary. Besides the series of events that culminated in a special observance on Human Rights Day 1998, UNIS continued to take the lead in organizing commemorations at the Palais des Nations of other international days, such as International Women's Day (8 March), International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March), International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 October), and International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (29 November).

92. UNIS Geneva organized the production of a special exhibit commemorating the anniversary for the annual Open Day held at the Palais des Nations, with the support of the European Parliament. The Service arranged for its shipment to Geneva and transport to the European Parliament at Strasbourg, France. This exhibit, with texts in English and French, was comprised of three parts: a historical introduction to the Declaration, selected articles of the Declaration, and a section on human rights in the coming century.

93. UNIS Geneva organized the thirty-sixth annual Graduate Study Programme from 6 to 24 July 1998 on the theme "All Human Rights for All: a Critical Appraisal". Eighty international post-graduate students and young diplomats, selected on the basis of academic distinction or professional expertise, attended seminars given by human rights and other specialists, and produced a final document on the topic.

94. In the run-up to the 1998 Human Rights Day, UNIS Geneva wrote to 80 editors in chief in Switzerland requesting them to publish the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December, which yielded positive results. It monitored the press in the host country, especially in the German-speaking part, prepared summaries of the articles, and produced a special media report on the press coverage of the anniversary in Switzerland.

95. During 1997-1998, UNIS successfully implemented a programme of informing information centres of the work of the treaty bodies that meet at Geneva.

Country reports are sent to concerned UNICs, along with background press releases and the final observations of each body. In return, UNICs are requested to provide opinion-oriented articles on the human rights debate and statements on government practices to UNIS Geneva. This information is submitted to OHCHR, which can then evaluate the impact of the human rights programme in the international media, and respond to misperceptions as they arise. For those meetings at Headquarters, DPI provides the same services and reporting.

United Nations information centres and services and United Nations Offices

96. More than 59 United Nations information centres, services and offices commemorated Human Rights Day on 10 December 1997, helping to launch the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Working in cooperation with Governments and civil society around the world, the information centres organized press conferences, seminars and student rallies, produced radio and television programmes, and translated the Universal Declaration. It would be impossible to reflect comprehensively all of the activities undertaken by the network of United Nations Information Centres and Services during the reporting period. Highlights of the 1997 activities were contained in the report on the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004, and public information activities in the field of human rights (A/53/313).

97. In 1998, the UNICs and UNISs carried out a variety of activities, many within the context of the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration after the launch in December 1997. Many of their activities targeted youth. They collaborated with schools, educators and student groups to develop educational activities on Human Rights Day. Younger students were involved in briefings designed to present the Universal Declaration for Human Rights in an easy-to-understand format, often including drawing competitions, question-and-answer sessions and special projects. Older students took part in Model United Nations conferences, quiz programmes, poster and slogan competitions and debates.

98. UNIC Accra, the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service prepared a Human Rights Day curriculum for all ages. UNIC Asuncion and the Baha'i Community held a poster competition for some 30,000 students at 200 schools. UNIC Buenos Aires launched an interactive educational series, consisting of two diskettes entitled "All Human Rights for All", containing summaries of covenants and treaties as well as games and classroom exercises for primary and secondary school students. UNIC Colombo held an award ceremony for the schoolchildren of the Southern Province who had taken part in an essay and speech contest co-organized by the Centre and the Movement for the Defence of Democratic Rights. UNIC Copenhagen launched its educational human rights CD-ROM, produced in cooperation with the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the United Nations Association of Denmark and the Danish Centre for Human Rights. UNIC Cairo and Zagazig University held a seminar on human rights, featuring the Dean of the Law School and prominent NGOs. UNIC Dhaka and the NGO Youth Development Society jointly organized a rally in the district of Jhenaidah to mark Human Rights Day, with NGOs, students and human rights activists participating.

99. UNIC Kathmandu organized school programmes in the city and in five districts outside Kathmandu. UNIC Lagos and the National Human Rights Commission co-sponsored a nationwide human rights essay contest for secondary school students. UNIC Lima and *El Comercio*, the country's largest newspaper, brought together 750 high school students for a human rights workshop during which participants viewed the DPI video, "For Everyone, Everywhere", and produced a supplement published by the newspaper. UNIC Madrid arranged for a popular youth television series, "Be Home by Eleven", to dedicate an episode to a discussion about human rights and the fiftieth anniversary. UNIC Manila, the NGO Task Force for Detainees and the Student Council of the Maryhill School of Theology marked Human Rights Day with a symposium examining the Universal Declaration and the countries of the Asian-Pacific region.

100. UNIC Mexico City trained university students to brief elementary school students on human rights, and some 3,000 children took part in the "Children's Global Mail for Peace" project that donated a selection of their drawings to the DPI Human Rights Day Exhibit. A representative of UNIC Moscow delivered a speech at the opening of a Model UN conference focusing on human rights and the Universal Declaration. UNIC New Delhi collaborated with the NGO United Schools Organization to disseminate posters with the text of the Universal Declaration printed in Bhutanese, English, Hindi and Marathi to schools in New Delhi and Bhutan. UNIC Panama City, in cooperation with private sector partners, held a national high school drawing competition in which each student interpreted an article of the Universal Declaration. UNIC Port of Spain led a youth rally through the streets of the city on Human Rights Day. UNIC Rio de Janeiro commemorated Human Rights Day and the fiftieth anniversary of the high school of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro with a ceremony, round table and children's play. UNIC Rome, the Opera House La Scala of Milan, the municipality of Milan and two private sector companies co-sponsored a concert to benefit the children of Kosovo.

101. UNIC Sydney addressed the Burewood Girls High School on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and how the international community should continue to strengthen and renew its commitment to human rights in the twenty-first century. UNIC Warsaw, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Helsinki Foundation sponsored a nationwide secondary-school essay contest on the Universal Declaration.

102. UNO Azerbaijan gave a lecture on the Universal Declaration at the Lahic village school in the Ismaili district of Azerbaijan. UNO Belarus presented its cartoon booklet for children entitled *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Pictures* at an event for teachers and students in one of the largest regional centres in the country, Vitebsk. UNO Kazakhstan and the NGO "Association of Young Leaders" held a Model UN conference dedicated to human rights for 200 students from all regions of the country. UNO Uzbekistan and the National Centre for Human Rights published, in Russian and Uzbek, a cartoon booklet for children on the Universal Declaration.

103. UNICs also involved a number of local partners in the organizing of special events on and around Human Rights Day. These events included public forums, concerts, marches, sporting events and the sale of national postage stamps embossed with the logo of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration. UNIC Asuncion collaborated with the Postal Authority in Paraguay

to issue a commemorative fiftieth anniversary stamp. UNIC Islamabad and the Pakistan postal authorities launched a commemorative fiftieth anniversary stamp on Human Rights Day. UNIC Madrid held a national contest for the design of a commemorative postage stamp, in cooperation with the Spanish postal authorities, Unión Fenosa-Acex and the Federation of Associations for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights in Spain. UNIC Rabat, in cooperation with the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications of Morocco, arranged for the issuance of two commemorative fiftieth anniversary stamps on Human Rights Day.

104. UNIC Accra and the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice held a public forum on human rights, attended by some 200 people. UNIC Athens held a nationwide brochure competition commemorating the fiftieth anniversary in which each entry was required to incorporate the text of the Declaration and the anniversary logo. UNIS Bangkok, the International Movement ATD Fourth World, the French Embassy and the Alliance Française organized an NGO conference to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration. UNIC Bujumbura and the Association of Human Rights in Burundi sponsored a song competition, attended by 400 people. UNIC Buenos Aires and the Government held a torchlight procession on the evening of 10 December, attended by 3,000 people, which concluded with a fireworks display.

105. Amnesty International, in cooperation with UNIC Copenhagen and the Danish Centre for Human Rights, held a torchlight procession on Human Rights Day. UNIC Dhaka and the poetry association Meghdot Abriti Sangsad held a reading of human rights poems by the leading poets of Bangladesh. UNIC Harare and the national committee to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary held a special Human Rights Day event in the Harare Gardens, with a tree-planting. UNIC Jakarta and members of the United Nations system organized a special event on Human Rights Day that included an information fair, the screening of the Secretary-General's video-taped message and the DPI video, "For Everyone, Everywhere", and the launch of the Website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

106. UNIC Lisbon and the Government organized a special session of the Portuguese Parliament at which two measures were announced: the proclamation of 10 December as National Human Rights Day, and the creation of a special medal to be awarded to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the defence of human rights. In cooperation with UNIC London, a commemorative service was held at Westminister Abbey, organized by Amnesty International and UNA-UK. UNIC Madrid distributed two commemorative phone cards produced in cooperation with Telefónica, the national telephone company. UNIC Manila hosted an NGO event organized by the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates at which awards were presented to several NGOs for their work in the field of human rights. UNIC Mexico City and the city's Human Rights Commission held several events during a week-long observance of the fiftieth anniversary, including round tables on democracy, tolerance and human rights, a journalists' encounter, and a painting event for children. UNIC Moscow co-sponsored the Fourth Annual Human Rights Film Festival, which was organized by the Russian Guild of Film Directors and was dedicated to the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration.

107. UNIC Nairobi organized a series of events at the French Cultural Centre, including the screening of the Secretary-General's message and an official

ceremony, followed by a film on children's rights, the opening of a human rights exhibit and a concert. UNIC New Delhi and the National Human Rights Commission organized a ceremony at the India Habitat Centre. At the initiative of UNIC Panama City, the National Lottery Association issued a commemorative lottery ticket bearing the fiftieth anniversary logo and a brief text on the anniversary. UNIC Paris provided logistical and media assistance to the Secretary-General who was in Paris just prior to Human Rights Day to address the National Assembly. The Centre also made arrangements for the Secretary-General to receive a book of 10 million human rights petitions, collected by Amnesty International to mark the fiftieth anniversary.

108. UNIC Port of Spain organized a Human Rights Day ceremony at which the President of Trinidad and Tobago paid tribute to the United Nations for its work in the field of human rights. UNIC Prague and the Office of the President of the Czech Republic organized a human rights festival at Prague Castle, which included musical performances by human rights activists. UNIC Rabat and the Moroccan Committee on Human Rights kicked off a national human rights campaign, launched simultaneously in Casablanca, Marrakesh and Rabat.

109. At the initiative of UNIC Rome, a joint worldwide advocacy programme was undertaken in collaboration with Benetton, the Italian clothing company, in which the fiftieth anniversary logo and texts of articles from the Universal Declaration were featured on billboards and posters as well as in television, newspaper and magazine advertisements. UNIC Sana'a and UNA-Yemen held a soccer tournament between two leading teams which was attended by 2,000 people. UNIC Santa Fe de Bogota and the network of NGOs Colombia-Europa organized an outdoor rock concert for 45,000 people. UNIC Windhoek, UNESCO, the Ministry of Justice and the University of Namibia organized a ceremony held at the conclusion of a three-day conference to discuss regional human rights issues and to review progress made since the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights. UNIC Yangon and members of the United Nations system in Myanmar held a Human Rights Day ceremony for 400 people.

110. UNICs organized Human Rights Day seminars, public debates and round tables on such important issues as the Government's role in safeguarding against human rights violations, the establishment of the International Criminal Court, preventing human rights abuses during war and protecting human rights in the twenty-first century. These events engaged government officials, NGOs, academics and policy makers in active discussion about United Nations activities in the field of human rights and action being taken on the national and local levels.

111. Such events were carried out, inter alia, by the UNICs in Athens, Brussels, Bucharest, Colombo, Dakar, Dhaka, Lagos, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Manila, Maseru, Mexico City, Moscow, New Delhi, Paris, Port of Spain, Rome, Sana'a, Santa Fe de Bogota, Sydney, Tehran, Tokyo, Warsaw and Washington. UNO Azerbaijan and UNO Kazakhstan also reported such activities.

112. Numerous exhibits were mounted by UNICs and UNISs for the fiftieth anniversary. UNIC Accra, in cooperation with the French Embassy and the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, mounted an exhibit

and screened the DPI film, "For Everyone, Everywhere", at the Alliance Française. With the United Colours of Benetton, UNIC Asuncion sponsored an exhibit of sculptures and paintings on the theme of human rights by popular national artists at the National Museum. UNIC Athens organized an exhibit of United Nations photos, posters and enlarged samples of the Universal Declaration brochures produced in a national competition held by the Centre earlier in the year. UNIC Beirut set up an information stand to distribute United Nations human rights publications during the city's forty-second International Book Fair. UNIC Brussels set up information kiosks at a Human Rights Day conference in the Netherlands and in Ghent, Belgium, organized by a consortium of NGOs. UNIC Buenos Aires and the municipality of San Isidro mounted an exhibit entitled "Fifty Years of Human Rights in Pictures" in the San Isidro parliament building, and the city of San Isidro produced 500 large street banners which were prominently displayed throughout the city.

113. UNIC Copenhagen and the Danish Centre for Human Rights mounted a three-month exhibit at the National Museum depicting each of the articles of the Universal Declaration. UNIC Dhaka and the Law Department of Chittagong University organized a human rights publications exhibit at the university, which included five publications translated into Bengali by the Centre. UNIC Islamabad held a three-day exhibit at the National Museum of 150 historic photographs and posters depicting articles of the Universal Declaration. The Centre also arranged to have the DPI video, "For Everyone, Everywhere", screened for visitors. UNIC Lima and the National Library of Peru mounted a photo and book exhibit in honour of the fiftieth anniversary. UNIC Lomé provided posters on the Universal Declaration for an exhibit mounted at the Human Rights Documentation Centre. UNIC London provided information materials for a human rights photo exhibit mounted at the Tom Blau Gallery in London. UNIC Mexico City and 25 organizations took part in an information fair organized by the National Commission on Human Rights.

114. UNIC Moscow and the Human Rights Publishers company mounted an exhibit of human rights publications. UNIC Ouagadougou, in cooperation with 20 human rights NGOs and international organizations, mounted an information fair at the Centre that was inaugurated by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Justice. UNIC Panama City, in collaboration with 36 well-known national artists, mounted a month-long exhibit of paintings at the City Hall depicting each article of the Universal Declaration. UNIC Rabat and members of the United Nations system mounted a display of human rights information materials at a four-day national conference on the right to development. UNIC Sydney, in cooperation with the Attorney General's Office, set up an exhibit of human rights photos, posters and information materials at the Parliament House in Canberra and screened the DPI documentary, "For Everyone, Everywhere". UNIC Tokyo co-sponsored many human rights exhibits mounted in the various prefectures in Japan, where thousands of exhibit brochures and leaflets were distributed. UNIS Vienna and the Association of Mouth and Foot Painters Worldwide launched an exhibit of "Peace Paintings" created by members of the Association. Before the opening ceremony, two of the artists demonstrated their technique. UNO Belarus and two local artists mounted an exhibit of photos and artwork depicting freedom and human rights abuses, entitled "Everyone Has the Right", at the Friendship House in Minsk and at the Belarusian Cinema Workers Union.

115. Information centres and services arranged special Human Rights Day ceremonies, held in cooperation with host Governments, NGOs and members of the United Nations system. As of December, reports had been received from the following UNICs: Accra, Beirut, Brussels, Bucharest, Buenos Aires, Colombo, Dhaka, Lisbon, Madrid, Manila, Maseru, New Delhi, Ouagadougou, Paris, Port of Spain, Rome, Santa Fe de Bogota, Tokyo and Yangon.

116. In the years leading up to the fiftieth anniversary, the Department of Public Information worked extensively through the UNICs and UNISs around the world to translate and publish the text, especially in local languages and dialects and indigenous languages, as well as in language versions of Braille, and to make these language versions accessible. In 1998 alone, UNICs and UNISs translated and published the Universal Declaration in 55 local languages, including a number of widely spoken indigenous languages. The Declaration is now one of the most widely translated documents in the world. More than 260 language versions of the Universal Declaration are now on the Website which was inaugurated on Human Rights Day 1998 at Headquarters.

117. Recent examples of this initiative include: UNIC Ankara into Turkish; UNIC Asuncion into Guarani; UNIC Buenos Aires into Toba and Mapuche; UNIC Dakar into Pulaar, Sereer and Wolof, UNIC Harare into Ndebele and Shona; UNIC Jakarta into Achehnese, Balinese, Bugisnese, Javanese, Madurese, Minangkabau and Sudanese; UNIC Lusaka into Bemba, Nyanja and Tonga; UNICs Lima and La Paz into Ashaninka, Aymara, Quechua and Guarani; UNIC Lomé into Ewe and Kabye; UNIC Madrid into Basque and Catalan; UNIC Maseru into Sesotho; UNIC Mexico City into 15 indigenous languages - Chinanteco, Huasteco, Maya, Mazahua, Mazateco, Mixteco, Ñahñu, Náhuatl, Otomí, Purhépecha, Tenek, Tojol ábal, Totonaco, Tzeltal, Zapoteco; UNIC New Delhi into Bhojpuri, Kashmiri, Sanskrit, Magahi, Marwari and Sindhi; UNIC Prague into Czech; UNIC Rabat into Berber; UNIC Yangon into Karan, Myanmar and Shan; UNO Azerbaijan into Azeri; UNO Kazakhstan into Kazak; and UNO Georgia into Georgian.

118. Several UNICs have published adaptations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for children in local languages. These include UNIC Bucharest into Romanian, UNIC Lima into Spanish, UNIC Rabat into Arabic and French, UNO Belarus into Russian and UNO Uzbekistan into Russian and Uzbek. In addition to translating the Universal Declaration into local languages, UNICs published in local languages a number of other human rights information products, including special newspaper supplements. UNIC Brussels published an educational booklet in French and Dutch, entitled "All Human Rights for All: Are Human Rights Really Universal?" UNIC Bucharest and United Nations system partners jointly produced an educational booklet for children on the significance of the Universal Declaration. UNIC Dhaka translated the following human rights instruments into Bengali: the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the brochure *UN and Human Rights: Some Questions and Answers*. UNIC Madrid and the National Organization for the Blind in Spain published the Spanish text of the Universal Declaration in Braille. Based on this text, UNIC Panama City printed a Braille version with Macrotext, a large-face type to facilitate reading. UNIC Lima, in cooperation with the German Catholic Association for the Blind, launched a version of the Universal Declaration in Braille.

UNIC Port of Spain, with support from UNDP, UNICEF and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, published a commemorative fiftieth anniversary calendar depicting the articles of the Universal Declaration. The Centre also produced and mounted commemorative banners around the city. UNIC Tunis published a desktop agenda and calendar that included the Human Rights Day messages of the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights and a backgrounder on the Universal Declaration. UNIC Windhoek translated the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination into Afrikaans and Oshiwambo.

119. Throughout the year, UNICs translated and produced many other human rights publications and posted these materials on their Websites. UNICs with home pages include: Antananarivo, Athens, UNIS Bangkok, Beirut, Bonn, Copenhagen, UNIS Geneva, Lisbon, London, Mexico City, Panama City, Prague, Paris, Rome, Tokyo, and UNO Belarus.

120. As a result of extensive media outreach and the dissemination of human rights information materials translated into local languages by UNICs, the Secretary-General's Human Rights Day message was widely publicized, articles and commemorative newspaper supplements were published, public service announcements on the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration were broadcast, and Centre directors appeared on a number of radio and television programmes.

121. The following information centres and offices reported the printing or broadcast of the Secretary-General's message: Accra by the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation and TV3 Network; Bujumbura by *Ndongozi Y'Burundi and Le Renouveau du Burundi*; Cairo by *Al-Ahram*, *Al-Akbar*, and *Al-Gomhurya* and by Egyptian TV and Nile TV; Colombo by the *Daily News*, *The Island*, *Dinamina*, *Thinakaran*, *Weerakesari*, Sri Lanka Rupavahini TV, Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, Independent Television Network, Maharaja Network, Lakhanda Radio, Siarsa FM Radio and Sun FM Radio; Harare by Zimbabwe National Television; Islamabad by Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation and Shalimar Television; Lima by *El Comercio*, *La Republica*, and the Global TV Network; Madrid by *El Mundo*, *Diario 16* and Spanish TV-1; Manila by *The Manila Bulletin*, *The Philippine Star* and ZNN Channel 21; Maseru by Lesotho TV; Moscow by Russian Public Television; Nairobi by *The Kenyan Times* and the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation; New Delhi by *The Times of India*, *The Hindu*, *The Pioneer*, Asianet and Dordarshan; Ouagadougou by *Sidwaya*, *AIB*, *Le Journal du Soir*, *le Pays*, *l'Observateur Paalga* and *Le Journal du Jeudi*; Panama City by *El Panama America*, TV Channels 5 and 11; Rabat by *Map Actualité*, *Al Maghrib*, *Al Alam*; Rome by Mediaset, RAI and Vatican Radio; Sana'a by Sana'a TV Channel 1; Tunis by *La Presse de Tunisie*, *Al Hourria Essabah* and *Tunisian TV*; Warsaw by Polish Public Television and Radio; Windhoek by Namibia Broadcasting Corporation; UNO Azerbaijan by Azeri State TV; UNO Belarus by Belarusian Radio; UNO Georgia by Georgian State TV Corporation; UNO Kazakhstan by Khabar and Kazakhstan 1; and UNO Uzbekistan by National TV Channel 1.

122. UNICs and UNISs carried out numerous other media outreach activities. More complete information on their activities for the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration can be found on the United Nations Website at: www.un.org/aroundworld/unics/home.htm.

Annex

PUBLICATIONS ISSUED BY THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AS AT DECEMBER 1998

FACT SHEETS

No. 1 *Human Rights Machinery*
No. 2 *The International Bill of Human Rights* (Rev.1)
No. 3 *Advisory Services and Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights* (Rev.1)
No. 4 *Methods of Combatting Torture*
No. 5 *Programme of Action for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination*
No. 6 *Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances* (Rev.2)
No. 7 *Communication Procedures*
No. 8 *World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights*
No. 9 *The Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (Rev.1)
No. 10 *The Rights of the Child* (Rev.1)
No. 11 *Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions* (Rev. 1)
No. 12 *The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*
No. 13 *International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights*
No. 14 *Contemporary Forms of Slavery*
No. 15 *Civil and Political Rights: The Human Rights Committee*
No. 16 *The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (Rev.1)
No. 17 *The Committee against Torture*
No. 18 *Minority Rights* (Rev. 1)
No. 19 *National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights*
No. 20 *Human Rights and Refugees*
No. 21 *The Human Right to Adequate Housing*
No. 22 *Discrimination against Women: The Convention and the Committee*
No. 23 *Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children*
No. 24 *The Rights of Migrant Workers*
No. 25 *Forced Eviction and Human Rights*

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING SERIES

No. 1 *Human Rights and Social Work: A Manual for Schools of Social Work and the Social Work Profession* (HR/P/TP/1) (Sales No. E.94.XIV.4)
No. 2 *Human Rights and Elections: A Handbook on the Legal, Technical and Human Rights Aspects of Elections* (HR/P/TP/2) (Sales No. E.94.XIV.5)
No. 3 *Human Rights and Pre-Trial Detention: A Handbook of International Standards relating to Pre-Trial Detention* (HR/P/TP/3) (Sales No. E.94.XIV.6)
No. 4 *National Human Rights Institutions: A Handbook on the Establishment and Strengthening of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights* (HR/P/TP/4) (Sales No. E.95.XIV.2)
No. 5 *Human Rights and Law Enforcement: A Manual on Human Rights Training for the Police* (HR/P/TP/5) (Sales No. E.96.XIV.5)
No. 5/Add.1 *International Human Rights Standards for Law Enforcement: A Pocket Book on Human Rights for the Police* (HR/P/TP/5/Add.1) (Sales No. E.96.XIV.6)

HUMAN RIGHTS STUDY SERIES

No. 1 *Right to Adequate Food as a Human Right* (Sales No. E.89.XIV.2)
No. 2 *Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religion or Belief* (Sales No. E.89.XIV.3)
No. 3 *Freedom of the Individual under Law: an Analysis of Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Sales No. E.89.XIV.5)
No. 4 *Status of the Individual and Contemporary International Law: Promotion, Protection and Restoration of Human Rights at National, Regional and International Levels* (Sales No. E.91.XIV.3)
No. 5 *Study on the Rights of Persons belonging to Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities* (Sales No. E.91.XIV.2)
No. 6 *Human Rights and Disabled Persons* (Sales No. E.92.XIV.4)
No. 7 *The Right to Adequate Housing* (Sales No. E.96.XIV.3)
No. 8 *Sexual Exploitation of Children* (Sales No. E.96.XIV.7)
No. 9 *Internally Displaced Persons. Compilation and Analysis of Legal Norms* (Sales No. E.97.XIV.2)
No. 10 *Protection of the Heritage of Indigenous Peoples* (Sales No.E.97.XIV.3)

NOTE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

No. 1 *The High Commissioner for Human Rights: an Introduction - Making Human Rights a Reality* (HR/PUB/HCHR/96/1)

1998 - FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

BASIC INFORMATION KITS

No. 1 *1998 - 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
No. 2 *Women's Rights the Responsibility of All*
No. 3 *Children's Rights: Creating a Culture of Human Rights*
No. 4 *Human Rights Education: Lessons for Life*

HUMAN RIGHTS QUARTERLY

No. 1 Winter 1997/1998
No. 2 Spring 1998
No. 3 Summer 1998

AD HOC PUBLICATIONS

*European Workshop on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Past-Present-Future (Milan, Italy, 7-9 September 1988)* (HR/PUB/89/1)
*The Administration of Justice and Human Rights for East European Countries: Report of a United Nations Training Course (Moscow, 21-25 November 1988)* (HR/PUB/89/2)
*The Teaching of Human Rights: Report of an International Seminar (Geneva, 5-9 December 1988)* (HR/PUB/89/3)
*The Effects of Racism and Racial Discrimination on the Social and Economic Relations between Indigenous Peoples and States: Report of a Seminar (Geneva, 16-20 January 1989)* (HR/PUB/89/5)

*Application of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights under the Optional Protocol by the Human Rights Committee* (Reprint No. 1 (4))
*The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights* (HR/PUB/90/1)
*Report of an International Consultation on AIDS and Human Rights (Geneva, 26-28 July 1989)* (HR/PUB/90/2)
*United Nations Training Course on International Norms and Standards in the Field of Human Rights (Moscow, 27 November-1 December 1989)* (HR/PUB/90/6)
*Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination: Global Compilation of National Legislation against Racial Discrimination* (HR/PUB/90/8)
*Manual on Human Rights Reporting* (HR/PUB/91/1) (Sales No. E.91.XIV.1)
*The Realization of the Right to Development: Global Consultation on the Right to Development as a Human Right (Geneva, 8-12 January 1990)* (HR/PUB/91/2)
*Political, Historical, Economic, Social and Cultural Factors contributing to Racism, Racial Discrimination and Apartheid: Report of a Seminar (Geneva, 10 January-14 December 1990)* (HR/PUB/91/3)
*The First Twenty Years: Progress Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination* (HR/PUB/91/4)
*Workshop on International Human Rights Instruments and Reporting Obligations: Preparation of Reports to United Nations Human Rights Treaty Bodies (Moscow, 26-30 August 1991)* (HR/PUB/91/5)
*African Seminar on International Human Rights Standards and the Administration of Justice (Cairo, 8-12 July 1992)* (HR/PUB/91/6)
*Teaching and Learning about Human Rights - A Manual for Schools of Social Work and the Social Work Profession* (HR/PUB/92/1)
*United Nations Workshop for the Asia-Pacific Region on Human Rights Issues (Jakarta, 26-28 January 1993)* (HR/PUB/93/1)
*HIV/AIDS and Human Rights - International Guidelines* (HR/PUB/98/1) (Sales No. E.98.XIV.1)

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

*ABC - Teaching Human Rights*
*United Nations Reference Guide in the Field of Human Rights* (ST/HR/6) (Sales No. E.93.XIV.4)
*United Nations Action in the Field of Human Rights* (ST/HR/2/Rev.4) (Sales No. E.94.XIV.11)
*United Nations Reference Guide in the Field of Human Rights* (ST/HR/6) (Sales No. E.93.XIV.4)
*Human Rights: A Compilation of International Instruments* (vol. I, first and second parts) (ST/HR/1/Rev.5)(Sales No. E.94.XIV.1)
*Human Rights: A Compilation of International Instruments - Regional Instruments* (vol. II) (ST/HR/1/Rev.5, vol. II) (Sales No. E.97.XIV.1)
*Human Rights: Status of International Instruments* (ST/HR/5) (Sales No. E.87.XIV.2)
*Human Rights: International Instruments. Chart of Ratifications as at 31 December 1997* (ST/HR/4/Rev.16)
*Human Rights Bibliography*, 5 vols. (Sales No. GV.E.92.0.16)
*Official Records of the Human Rights Committee*
*Selected decisions of the Human Rights Committee under the Optional Protocol*
*Human Rights in Action*, brochure

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# PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS: INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

## Implementation of the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004)

## Report of the Secretary-General

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# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION 1/

1. The present document supplements the report on the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education and public information activities in the field of human rights submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly (A/53/313 of 27 August 1998) by providing relevant new information on activities carried out or reported between September and mid-December 1998.

2. As in the corresponding section of the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, the present report follows the structure of the Plan of Action, illustrating the advances in the implementation of each component of the Plan. Only the components for which some progress took place in the above-mentioned period are dealt with.

## A. Components two and three: Strengthening international and regional programmes and capacities for human rights education

3. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and several international and regional Decade partners, alone and in cooperation with the Office, have undertaken human rights education activities in the period under review. Owing to constraints of space, the present section does not refer to educational activities carried out specifically as a contribution to the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (such as commemorative panels, conferences and other special events); that information can be retrieved from the section of the Office's Website dedicated to the fiftieth anniversary.

### 1. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

4. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has continued to disseminate information on the Decade and on human rights education by answering related inquiries, on a daily basis, from interested representatives of Governments, intergovernmental, non-governmental organizations, and other organizations and from academics, students and other individuals. In addition, the Office has continued to take an active part in related activities (such as the International Conference on Human Rights Education in the Asia-Pacific Region, Osaka, November 1998, and the Regional Conference on Human Rights Education in Africa, Dakar, December 1998), special events and other initiatives such as those highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General to the Commission on Human Rights on public information activities in the field of human rights (E/CN.4/1999/86).

5. As indicated in the aforementioned report to the General Assembly (A/53/313), the ACT (Assisting Communities Together) Project was launched in 1998 to assist organizations and individuals at the local level in carrying out activities aimed at strengthening the promotion and protection of human

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1/ See Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/45, resolution 1998/11 of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, and General Assembly resolution 53/153.

rights in local communities. During the last week of September 1998, the ACT Project selection committee, made up of OHCHR, UNDP, UNOPS and representatives of civil society, selected the first ACT Project grant recipients. Sixty-nine individual grants totalling approximately US$ 130,000 were awarded to human rights initiatives in 24 countries. UNDP Resident Representatives, field offices of the Office of the High Commissioner and UNOPS have cooperated in the transfer of grant awards to recipients. The majority of grant recipient initiatives will be completed by the end of 1998 and a global report on the implementation of the pilot phase of the ACT Project will be prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner in the first quarter of 1999. Thanks to voluntary contributions, a second round of ACT Project grants will be awarded in early 1999.

6. The Office has also continued its technical cooperation activities to strengthen national capacities in the field of human rights, including human rights education and public information. Details of activities at the national, regional and global levels are provided in the relevant report of the Secretary-General to the Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/1999/99).

## 2. Non-governmental organizations

7. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has continued to support actively the establishment of human rights education programmes by non-governmental organizations through broad dissemination of the material published by the Office (see below, component six). In addition to the information already provided in the above-mentioned report to the General Assembly (A/53/313), international non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council have informed the Office of their contribution to the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Decade as set out below.

8. Amnesty International has forwarded to the Office its new publication Siniko - Towards a Human Rights Culture in Africa, a practical manual for teachers and educators in Africa who work with young people in both formal and non-formal educational environments.

9. The Anti-Racism Information Service (ARIS) has been disseminating the text of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, as well as informing non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the public at large of anti-racism actions undertaken by the United Nations. ARIS has further facilitated the work of NGOs by assisting them in the formulation and submission of documents to United Nations bodies, by providing them with information during the sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and by organizing briefing sessions between NGOs and the Committee members. ARIS has also been training interns on the purposes of the Convention and the Committee.

10. The Association Mondiale pour l'Ecole Instrument de Paix (EIP) has focused its human rights education work on the following areas: (a) training of trainers and educators; (b) research in the pedagogical field; (c) publication of a bulletin and a thematic series; (d) establishment of an

international network of teachers interested and active in this field; and (e) participation in related United Nations meetings, and other conferences and seminars.

11. The Asian Institute of Human Rights Education has organized several conferences to promote awareness of human rights since 1995, the year in which the Institute was founded as a contribution to the Decade; up to now, more than 20,000 participants have attended those gatherings, organized in collaboration with governmental and non-governmental agencies.

12. The Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University has undertaken several projects, including: "Igniting the spirit of human dignity", to promote the values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; "Young women of wisdom", a programme designed by young women for young women to celebrate the girl child; and "Living values: an educational program", supported by UNESCO and UNICEF, whose purpose is to provide guiding principles and tools for the development of persons while recognizing the various spiritual dimensions of individuals. The organization publishes training tools and public information material.

13. The Education Centre for Women in Democracy informed the Office that it played an active monitoring role in the 1997 elections in Kenya. Its participation during this period led to a pilot project entitled "Integrated civic education on gender and human rights", under which human rights monitors were trained as paralegals on the Kenyan legal system, particularly as it relates to women. These paralegals have been promoting and disseminating information concerning human rights and human rights education. In addition, collaboration with Amnesty International and other organizations is being established in order to promote a Human Rights Manifesto for Kenya.

14. Enfant du Monde - Droits de l'Homme reported on its activities in the area of education on the rights of the child, including activities for children in and out of school, training of teachers, maintenance of a documentation centre and an Internet site, legal assistance, organization of conferences and seminars on related issues and publication of pedagogical material.

15. The International Council of Prison and Medical Services, which provides a forum for the exchange of knowledge and skills for those involved with the health care of prisoners, has organized a conference and undertaken a review of the health of prisoners in the Baltic countries; in addition, it is developing training programmes and materials for prison health-care staff in Eastern Europe, emphasizing United Nations standards concerning the treatment of prisoners.

16. The International Federation of Journalists is significantly involved in educational activities for the media sector, including the development of professional codes of conduct (such as the Guidelines for Journalists on Reporting on Children and Child Rights and the International Code of Practice for the Safe Conduct of Journalism) and the dissemination of information concerning human rights violations, in particular against journalists. In addition, the Federation organizes training seminars for this professional group on human rights reporting and on related issues in several parts of the

world; it has established a prize for journalists who have made an outstanding contribution to multicultural understanding, and is closely working with OHCHR in the preparation of a human rights training package for journalists.

17. The International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination has written to all Ministries of Education to encourage them to include human rights education in the school curricula. The Open Society Institute has published an annotated human rights education bibliography.

18. Soroptimist International has conducted human rights training programmes worldwide focusing especially on the empowerment of women and children and the problem of domestic violence. Furthermore, they have developed specific national programmes in selected countries, in partnership with the authorities, such as the training of human rights officers in Philippine villages and the establishment of a telephone counselling line for abused children in Zimbabwe.

19. United Schools International has held an All-India Teachers Seminar and has promoted human rights awareness through the publication of a guidebook and memorabilia on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Women's World Summit Foundation, devoted to women's empowerment, organized the World Rural Women's Day Campaign (15 October) in cooperation with the International Federation of Agricultural Producers. In December, the Foundation organized the 10-day series of round tables entitled "Human dignity for all, a call for transformation".

20. Finally, various organizations (such as the International Movement for Fraternal Union among Races and Peoples, United Schools International, the Women's World Summit Foundation, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts and the World Young Women's Christian Association) included information on human rights education and on the Universal Declaration in their magazines and/or Websites.

### B. Components four and five: Strengthening national and local programmes and capacities for human rights education

21. At the national level, the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education provides for the establishment, upon the initiative of Governments or other relevant institutions, of a national committee for human rights education, which should include a broad coalition of governmental and non-governmental actors and should be responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive (in terms of outreach), effective (in terms of educational strategies) and sustainable (over the long term) national plan of action for human rights education, with the support of regional and international organizations. The call for the establishment of such plans has been reiterated both by the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights.

22. In order to assist Member States in this undertaking, the Office of the High Commissioner has developed Guidelines for National Plans of Action for Human Rights Education (A/52/469/Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1). A letter signed

by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Director-General of UNESCO, forwarding the Guidelines, was sent to all Heads of Government in September 1998 and is being copied to all relevant national partners.

23. A number of Governments, such as those of Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Chad, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Ghana, the Holy See, India, Italy, Japan, Malta, Morocco, Norway, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Sudan, Switzerland, Tunisia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, have reported related initiatives. Information on their activities has been provided in the previous reports of the High Commissioner and of the Secretary-General. The following new information has been forwarded to the Office in the period under review:

(a) Argentina. Recent activities have included: human rights training for administration of justice officials (police, security forces, judges, etc.), teachers and governmental officials; conclusion of cooperation agreements with private and public universities and organization of joint initiatives; development of education plans at the provincial level; special events, such as school competitions, conferences and sports games; and public dissemination, also through a television and radio campaign, of the Universal Declaration.

(b) Canada. Canada has prepared and made available to the public a thematic and country-by-country human rights report based on United Nations sources, entitled For the Record 1997.

(c) Croatia. As already reported, the Government of the Republic of Croatia established, in 1996, a National Committee for Human Rights Education, consisting of 17 experts. The Committee has established a National Programme of Human Rights Education within the formal education system, based on national and international human rights instruments and focusing on extra-curricular activities and on integration with programmes carried out in the framework of cooperation with international organizations (UNICEF, UNESCO). The Croatian programme was elaborated on the basis of a survey of other countries' programmes conducted by a group of pedagogical science experts from the University of Zagreb.

(d) Cuba. The Government of Cuba has focused on the goal of making education accessible to all Cubans. In the school year starting in September 1998, a new school regulation - which will be open to discussion by students and will stimulate a debate on their rights and duties - will enter into force.

(e) Czech Republic. The Ministry of Education has provided information concerning human rights education in schools; it affirmed that primary and secondary school curricula cover international human rights standards, and specific policy and materials have been elaborated in consultation with NGOs active in the field of the rights of the child. The Ministry also formulated the State Policy in Respect of the Young Generation which covers, inter alia, human rights education and calls for cooperation between the Government and NGOs in this area; this policy paper represents the Czech national programme to meet the goals set by the 1990 World Summit for Children.

(f) Denmark. As previously reported, The Danish Ministry of Education, together with the Danish Centre for Human Rights, has developed a programme for human rights education for schools and youth. Two courses for teachers were held in the Spring 1997 with the participation of representatives from teaching aid centres, county resource centres, teacher training colleges, the Royal Danish School of Educational Studies, the Danish Red Cross, the Danish Refugees Council, Amnesty International, DanChurchAid and a number of experts. As a resource tool for those courses, a bibliography of human rights education materials (including textbooks and magazines, audiovisual materials and databases) was compiled.

(g) Fiji. The Government reported that the new Constitution (July 1998) provides for the establishment of a human rights commission, among whose tasks will be to promote human rights education.

(h) Ireland. The Government provided information about two initiatives within the Department of Foreign Affairs, in consultation with NGOs, towards the elaboration of a national plan of action. In addition, it mentioned the work of the National Committee for Development Education (NCDE) which is composed of representatives from a broad range of groups involved in development education, including the former education sector; women's and community groups; and NGOs. NCDE provides grant support for activities, including human rights education projects, undertaken by these groups. It is also involved in the integration of human rights in the school curricula.

(i) Mexico. At the initiative of the National Human Rights Commission, and in cooperation with various governmental agencies, in 1997-1998 a broad series of activities were undertaken, including: (a) training courses for public officials (immigration officers, police, security forces, prison officials, armed forces, health personnel, etc.); (b) courses on the rights of particularly vulnerable groups, in cooperation with those groups (women, indigenous peoples, children, migrants, prisoners, persons with disabilities and with HIV/AIDS, etc); (c) within the formal education system (including higher education and vocational training institutes), integration of human rights in the curricula, training of trainers, conferences and other activities; and (d) a public information campaign (including the development of the Documentation Centre of the National Commission, television and radio programmes, the development of the Commission Website, national awards and various publications).

(j) The Netherlands. While the Government is discussing the possible establishment of a national platform for human rights education, various related activities are currently being undertaken: concerning the school system, teaching materials are prepared mainly by NGOs on their initiative or in cooperation with the authorities, while the level of teaching human rights in the classroom is often left to the teacher's discretion; at the university level, as a result of the collaboration of several law faculties, the School of Human Rights Research was established; human rights training for public officials, police and the military is institutionalized; and public information campaigns are organized on relevant issues (for example, refugees and immigrants).

(k) Nigeria. The Government reported on the existence of a National Human Rights Commission which is mandated to promote human rights education.

(l) Peru. The National Council for Human Rights reported on initiatives undertaken (a) within the school system (in particular, the scope and content of the New Curricular Proposal for secondary schools), (b) by the Ministry of Justice (events targeted at administration of justice officials, such as judges and lawyers, but also at teachers and students; preparation of publications), and (c) by the Ministry of Defence and the Interior (respectively, training courses for armed forces and police, and the elaboration of related materials; and the development of specific joint programmes with NGOs, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education for the training o governmental officials on the rights of the child).

(m) Sweden. In January 1998, the Ministry of Education appointed a committee to survey human rights education at the national level and to make recommendations for improvements. Meanwhile, human rights are taught in schools at all levels, and related materials (including free access to the Internet) are made available. At the university level, several law faculties have compulsory courses in human rights (at Lund University the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law is active). Specific public information campaigns against racism and xenophobia and on th Holocaust have been launched recently. Various human rights publications are widely disseminated, such as a bibliography of human rights literature published in Sweden over the past 50 years, as a joint project by the Ministr of Education in cooperation with various NGOs, and training material for teachers developed by a broad NGO coalition.

(n) Turkey. In May 1998, the Human Rights Coordinating High Committe adopted the "Regulation on the establishment of the National Committee for the Decade for Human Rights Education" and established a national advisory committee for the Decade, consisting of representatives of the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministries of Justice, the Interior, Foreign Affairs, National Education, Health, and Culture, as well as four representatives of relevant voluntary institutions and academics with experience in this field. The Committee, functioning under the supervision o the Ministry of State in charge of Human Rights has adopted a related Nationa Programme. Professional groups such as security force, military and law enforcement personnel are given compulsory human rights training. The Ministry of State in charge of Human Rights has signed a protocol with the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation to promote human rights awareness in Turkey through the media.

(o) Venezuela. Human rights education is being introduced as an integral part of the national human rights plan, developed as a joint effort of governmental authorities, non-governmental organizations and the National Commission of Human Rights. Workshops and regional meetings of teachers are organized by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with various NGOs, such as Amnesty International/Venezuela, the Red de Apoyo para la Justicia y la Pa and the Programa Venezolano de Educación-Acción en Derechos Humanos (PROVEA). Relevant materials (such as the Valija Didactica: Educando en Valores developed by Amnesty International/Venezuela) are disseminated in all schools An International Seminar on Human Rights, in which representatives of

different sectors and NGOs involved in educational activities participated, was organized in July 1998. Lastly, the Ministry of Education informed OHCHR that various school programmes, activities and educational materials on the rights of the child have been developed in cooperation with UNICEF and the Centros Comunitarios de Aprendizaje (CECODAP).

### C. Component six: Coordinated development of materials for human rights education

24. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has continued the production of human rights publications and material and their dissemination among governmental and non-governmental organizations. Detailed information on the material available, including a full list of publications, is annexed to the report of the Secretary-General on public information activities in the field of human rights (E/CN.4/1999/86).

25. The following publications, prepared in the framework of the Decade, are currently being printed:

(a) The Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), a booklet compiled from the texts of the international Plan of Action for the Decade and of the Guidelines for national plans of action for human rights education;

(b) "Human rights education and human rights treaties", a study including (i) a compilation of human rights education provisions in the main human rights treaties and in other documents (general comments, etc.) adopted by treaty bodies; (ii) an assessment of the information - collected during a sample period - relating to human rights education contained in State party reports to the treaty bodies and the corresponding concluding observations and recommendations of the treaty bodies; (iii) suggestions for action on the part of the treaty bodies in the light of the information gathered, as a further contribution to the Decade;

(c) The Right to Human Rights Education, a compilation of the full texts of or excerpts from international and regional instruments pertaining to human rights education;

(d) Human Rights Trainers' Guide, a methodological approach to the human rights training of professional groups;

(e) Human Rights Education - Lessons for Life, the fourth OHCHR information kit, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a means for facilitating information-sharing among all interested partners.

26. Work has continued on the training packages to support training activities addressed to professional and other target groups (prison officers; primary and secondary school teachers; judges and lawyers; national and local non-governmental organizations; journalists; human rights monitors; parliamentarians). A handbook on conflict resolution is also being finalized.

27. Lastly, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has continued actively to collect materials for human rights education. Access this collection has been made available, upon request, to human rights educators who have visited the Office.

### D. Component eight: Global dissemination of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

28. On 10 December 1998, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights launched its new Website section comprising more than 250 national a local language versions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (the l of language versions currently being made available by the Office is contai in the annex to the present report). This new section is available at the following address: http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/index.htm .

29. This major project of the Office has been the result of a global cooperative effort on the part of many partners: (a) United Nations agencie programmes and other organs, including OHCHR field presences, the Department of Public Information of the United Nations (DPI) and its Information Centre and Services (UNIC and UNIS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) national offices, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and its regional offices and national commissions, and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU); (b) Governments and their Permanent Missions to the United Nations; (c) international, regional and local non-governmental organizations; (d) universities and linguistic institutes. The final phase of this project has been sponsored by the Government of the Republic of San Marino.

## Annex

LANGUAGE VERSIONS OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS BEING MADE AVAILABLE BY THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, AS OF DECEMBER 1998

### Africa

Adja
Afrikaans
Akuapem Twi
Amharic
Arabic (Alarabia)
Asante
Bambara
Baoulé/Baule
Batonu (Bariba)
Bemba
Béti
Dagaare
Dagbani
Dangme
Dendi
Ditammari
English
Ewe/Eve
Fante
Fon
French (Français)
Ga
Gonja
Guen (Mina)
Hausa/Haoussa
Igbo
Kabyè
Kaonde
Kasem
Kinyarwanda
Kituba
Kpelewo
Lingala
Lozi
Luganda/Ganda
Lunda/Chokwe-lunda
Luvale
Malagasy
Maninka
Mooré/More
Ndebele
Nigerian Pidgin English
Northern Sotho/Pedi/Sepedi
Nyanja/Chinyanja
Nzema
Oshiwambo (Ndonga)
Peuhl
Portuguese (Português)
Pulaar
Rukonzo (Konjo)
Rundi/Kirundi
Runyankore-rukiga/ Nkore-kiga
Seereer
Shona
Siswati
Somali
Southern Sotho/Sotho/Sesotho /Sutu/Sesutu
Sussu/Soussou/Sosso /Soso/Susu
Swahili/Kiswahili
Tamazight (Beraber)
Tonga
Wama
Western Sotho/Tswana/Setswana
Wolof
Xhosa
Yoruba (Yorùbá)
Zulu

### Asia and the Pacific

Achehnese
Arabic (Alarabia)
Assamese
Balinese
Bengali
Bhojpuri
Bhutanese/Dzongkha
Bikol/Bicolano
Bugisnese
Burmese/Myanmar
Cebuano
Chamorro
Chinese (Mandarin)
English
Filipino (Tagalog)
French (Français)
Gujarati
Hiligaynon
Hindi
Iloko/Ilocano
Indonesian
Japanese (Nihongo)
Javanese
Kannada
Karen (Pwo)
Karen (S'gaw)
Kashmiri
Kazakh
Khmer
Korean (Hankuko)
Kyrgyz
Lao
Madurese
Magahi
Malay (Bahasa Melayu)
Malayalam
Maori
Marathi
Marshallese
Minangkabau
Mongolian (Khalkha)
Nepali
Oriya
Palauan
Pashto/Pakhto
Ponapean
Portuguese (Português)
Punjabi/Panjabi
Sanskrit
Sindhi
Sinhala
Spanish (Español)
Sundanese
Tahitian
Tamil
Tatar
Telugu
Thai
Tibetan
Trukese (Chuuk)
Turkmen

Urdu
Uzbek (Cyrillic)
Uzbek (Latin)
Vietnamese
Yapese

Central and South America
Achuar-Shiwiar
Aguaruna
Amahuaca
Amarakaeri
Amuesha-Yanesha
Arabela
Ashâninca
Asheninca
Aymara
Bora
Cakchiquel
Campa pajonalino
Candoshi-Shapra
Caquinte
Cashibo-Cacataibo
Cashinahua
Chayahuita
Garifuna (Garífuna)
Guarani
Haitian Creole (Kreyol)
Haitian Creole (popular)
Huitoto Murui
K'iche' (Quiché)
Mam
Matsés
Mayan (Yucateco)
Miskito (Mískito)
Nomatsiguenga
Paez
Pipil
Portuguese (Português)
Q'echi/Kekchi
Quechua
Quechua de Ambo-Pasco
Quechua de Ayacucho
Quechua de Cajamarca
Quechua de Cotahuasi (Arequipa)
Quechua de Huamalies (Huanuco)
Quechua de Margos (Sur de Dios de Mayo, Huanuco)
Quechua de Pomabamba (Ancash)
Quechua del Callejon de Huaylas
Quechua del Cusco
Quechua del Norte de Junin
Quichua
Sharanahua
Shipibo-Conibo
Spanish (Español)
Ticuna
Urarina
Wayuu
Yagua

Europe
Albanian (Shqip)
Armenian
Azeri/Azerbaijani (Cyrillic)
Azeri/Azerbaijani (Latin)
Basque (Euskara)
Bosnian (Cyrillic script) (Bosanski)
Bosnian (Latin script) (Bosanski)
Breton
Bulgarian (Balgarski)
Byelorussian
Catalan (Català)
Corsican
Croatian (Hrvatski)
Czech (Cesky)
Danish (Dansk)
Dutch (Nederlands)
English
Estonian (Eesti)
Even
Faroese
Finnish (Suomea)
French (Français)
Frisian
Galician (Galego)
Georgian
German (Deutsch)
Greek (Ellinika')
Greenlandic (Inuktikut)
Hungarian (Magyar)
Icelandic (Islensku)
Irish Gaelic (Gaeilge)
Italian (Itali
Latin (Latina
Latvian
Lithuanian (Lietuviska
Luxembourgish (Lëtzebuerg
Macedonian
Maltese
Norwegian (Bo
(Norsk, Bok
Norwegian (Ny
(Norsk, Nyn
Occitan Auver
Occitan Langu
Picard
Polish (Polsk
Portuguese (P
Rhaeto-Romanc
Romani/Roma
Romanian (Rom
Russian (Russ
Sami/Lappish
Sammarinese
Sardinian
Scottish Gael (Gàidhlig
Albanasch)
Serbian (Cyri (Srpski)
Serbian (Lati (Srpski)
Slovak (Slove
Slovenian (Slovensci
Sorbian
Spanish (Espa
Swedish (Sve
Turkish (Tür
Ukrainian (Ukrayins'
Vlach
Walloon/Wall
Welsh (Cymra
Yiddish
Yukagir

Internationa
Esperanto
Interlingua

Middle East
Arabic (Alarabia)
Balochi
Dari
English
Farsi/Persian
French (Français)
Hebrew (Ivrit)
Kurdish

North America
Chinanteco
English
French (Français)
Mazahua (Jñatrjo)
Mazateco
Mikmaq/Micmac
(Mi'kmaq)
Mixteco
Nahuatl
Otomí (Ñahñú)
Purhépecha
Spanish (Español)
Tojol-a'b'al
Totonaco
Tseltal
Tzotzil
Tének (Huasteco)
Zapoteco
Zapoteco, San Lucas
Quiaviní

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# PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

## SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

## Question of the follow-up to the guidelines for the regulation of computerized personal data files: report of the Secretary-General prepared pursuant to Commission decision 1997/122

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GE.98-14566 (E)

## Introduction

1. In its decision 1997/122 of 16 April 1997, the Commission on Human Rights, referring to the guidelines for the regulation of computerized personal data files (E/CN.4/1990/72) adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 45/95 of 14 December 1990, and taking note of the report of the Secretary-General prepared pursuant to Commission decision 1995/114 of 8 March 1995 (E/CN.4/1997/67), decided:

(a) To request States and intergovernmental, regional and non-governmental organizations to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General by providing him with any relevant information on the application of the guidelines;

(b) To request the Secretary-General to continue to ensure the implementation of the guidelines in the United Nations system;

(c) To request the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-fifth session:

(i) On the application of the guidelines within the United Nations system;

(ii) On information collected from States and intergovernmental, regional and non-governmental organizations concerning the follow-up to the guidelines at the national and regional levels.

2. Pursuant to that decision, the Secretary-General, on 4 August 1997, addressed requests to United Nations organs, bodies, regional commissions, specialized agencies and related organizations for information on the application of the guidelines within the appropriate sections of the United Nations system.

3. On the same date, requests were also addressed to States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for information concerning the follow-up to the guidelines at the regional and national levels.

4. By 8 September 1998, replies had been received from the following United Nations organs, bodies and specialized agencies: United Nations Office at Nairobi, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children's Fund, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Meteorological Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization. The two latter agencies stated that they did not have any input to offer concerning the subject matter for the preparation of the report.

5. No replies were received from Governments.

6. The following non-governmental organization submitted information: International Federation of Human Rights.

7. The present report contains a summary of the substantive replies received. Any additional replies will be issued as addenda to this document.

## I. APPLICATION OF THE GUIDELINES WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

8. Only four United Nations entities submitted substantive replies. In 1997, 12 United Nations organs, bodies and regional commissions replied. In addition, 14 States replied (see E/CN.4/1997/67).

9. The United Nations Office at Nairobi stated that it was responsible for the management of human resources and maintenance of related data files for itself and for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT). All guidelines for the regulation of computerized personal data files were strictly observed. Significant improvements with respect to the principles of accuracy and security had been achieved through the implementation of the International Management Information System (IMIS) in 1997.

10. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) pointed out that it was currently working towards the establishment of rules within the Organization governing the collection, use or transfer of computerized personal information. However, currently no set of rules existed in FAO governing those issues, apart from two Administrative Circulars: No. 89/12, dealing with security policy on user access to FINSYS/PERSYS (finances and personnel), and No. 93/10, dealing with security principles for personal computers.

11. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) submitted the following statement:

> "UNHCR collects personal data on three categories of people: asylum seekers, refugees and internally displaced persons (external); and personnel (internal). UNHCR does not have specific directives touching upon all aspects of guidelines for the regulation of computerized personal data files. For example, no particular directives seem to exist regarding the importance of ensuring the exactness of data on individual refugees or regarding the right to access for refugees wishing to view their own file. Moreover, although Louis Joinet's report suggests that information regarding the political persuasions and beliefs of persons should not be collected so as to avoid discriminatory practices, UNHCR cannot comply with such a recommendation since information regarding political affiliation or religious conviction may be pertinent to refugee status determination.
>
> "However, some internal directives do exist. UNHCR follows the general policy espoused in the Secretary-General's 1991 bulletin on archives and records management (ST/SGB/242). This bulletin issues certain rules regarding the preservation and servicing of paper and electronic data, and prohibits the removal or destruction of records without specific written authorization.
>
> "Two particular directives concern personnel files. With regard to confidentiality, employees of the Division of Human Resources

Management only have access to files in their area of responsibility. All medical information is strictly confidential. Secondly, staff members are accorded the right to examine their official status file once per year. Perusal of personal files must take place in the presence of a staff member of the Division of Human Resources Management.

"With regard to files on refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons, UNHCR offices and staff are required to respect the confidentiality of certain information, including an individual's identity, age, sex, place of origin and political involvement. In addition, UNHCR offices are not to divulge any information about an individual's family, colleagues or friends. Finally, UNHCR disallows the publication of photographs of a refugee, asylum seeker or internally displaced person without the explicit consent of the person concerned, which is to be sought only after he or she has been duly counselled. Directives also specify and limit which UNHCR personnel have access to computerized data on refugees."

12. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) stated that the guidelines for the regulation of computerized personal data files had been taken into consideration and compliance with its principles was ensured, including access by the concerned staff member and the principle of security.

## II. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

### International Federation of Human Rights

[Original: French]
[10 February 1998]

13. The International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (IFHR) has submitted the following information:

"The League for Human Rights, which is very much aware of the question of computerized data files, has been working particularly closely on the problems of interconnection of social and tax data files; transposition into French law of the European Directive on the protection of personal data; video surveillance; and cryptology."

1. Interconnection of social and tax data files

"The League for Human Rights is opposing the proposals to establish connections between the data files of different administrations, especially where the NIR number, i.e. the social security number, would be used as a common reference.

The League for Human Rights objects to the significance of this number, in the sense that its structure is such as to permit the indication of significant particulars, for example, sex but also race or religion (as happened with the National Statistical Service in 1941-42).

On the basis of the information at its disposal, the League for Human Rights concludes that interconnections, carried to extremes in some countries, lead to the phenomenon of self-exclusion of the persons concerned, to avoid appearing in certain data files.

Accordingly, our association accords human rights status to the right to anonymity, especially in relation to the State."

2. Transposition into French law of the Directive on the protection of personal data

"The transposition into French law of Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data is being studied. The Directive must be transcribed into French law before the end of 1998.

A commission, the Braibant Commission, is working on this and has given a hearing to, among others, the League for Human Rights. The Directive aims to harmonize the level of protection of personal data among Member States so as to permit the free movement of such data. The League for Human Rights considers that the Directive could lower the level of protection existing at the time of transcription in each Member State. Consequently, the League for Human Rights is insisting that all the already existing guarantees be strictly maintained or strengthened."

3. Video surveillance

"The question of video surveillance is indirectly affected by the discussion since although domestic law excludes video surveillance from the jurisdiction of the Commission nationale informatique et liberté (CNIL) when no data files are created, the Directive does not seem to be quite so clear on this point.

The League for Human Rights has vigorously resisted video surveillance. Our criticisms, in particular as regards the invasion of privacy and the fact that those who conduct the video surveillance are not subject to serious controls, were and remain perfectly pertinent.

The League for Human Rights objects not only to video surveillance but also to its permanence since the installation of a video surveillance system in a locality seems to be a matter that lies outside the realm of party politics. Thus, once installed the system stays put, regardless of political changes. This campaign may enter a new dimension in connection with the discussion of the transposition into French law of the Directive on the protection of personal data."

4. Cryptology

"By means of sophisticated software, cryptology makes it possible to maintain the confidentiality of a message transmitted over the network, in particular the Internet. The position of the League for Human Rights is that cryptology on the Internet should be completely liberalized.

In fact, cryptology is prohibited in varying degrees all over the world. Thus, in the United States it is forbidden to export cryptology software (equated with weapons of war). In France, cryptology is subjected to very restrictive conditions. As a result, it is impossible for an individual - without infringing a law with criminal penalties - to communicate secretly on the Internet.

For the time being, Prime Minister Lionel Jospin has promised - at a communications summer university - to liberalize the cryptology regime by the adoption of decrees based on the 1996 law establishing the principle of the trusted third party, who would hold the key used to decipher an encrypted message (key escrow). A very strong popular movement is developing in the United States in favour of the secrecy of Internet correspondence.

The views of the League for Human Rights, which have been reported, in particular, in the specialized press, are now or will shortly also be available on the Internet server of Radio France Internationale."

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# PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS: SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

## Report of the Secretary-General submitted in accordance with Commission decision 1997/102

## Introduction

1. At its fifty-third session, the Commission on Human Rights adopted decision 1997/102, in which it invited the Secretary-General to bring his reports (contained in documents E/CN.4/1996/23 and Add.1 and E/CN.4/1997/18) on the question of human rights and the environment and the Commission's own consideration of this question to the attention of the General Assembly's special session on Agenda 21, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and other relevant international bodies and organizations. The Secretary-General was also requested to prepare a consolidated report based on the deliberations of the General Assembly and of those international bodies and organizations for consideration of the question of human rights and the environment by the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fifth session.

2. In accordance with that request, the Secretary-General addressed a letter to the Commission on Sustainable Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Secretariat, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the World Food Programme and the World Meteorological Organization on 19 May 1998, followed by a reminder on 12 October 1998, inviting their comments on the above-mentioned reports and on the deliberations of the General Assembly.

GE.98-05268 (E)

3. As of 8 December 1998, only one reply had been received, from FAO. That reply has been summarized below.

4. The present report provides, in addition to FAO's reply, a succinct analysis of subjects of common interest and concern in respect of human rights, environmental issues and sustainable development as reflected in the deliberations of the General Assembly's nineteenth special session on Agenda 21 held from 23-28 June 1997. 1/

## I. COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENTS AND BODIES

### Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

[Original: English]
[19 August 1998]

5. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) considered the reports of the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment as being too academic in nature and lacking pragmatic policy recommendations that could be implemented at the field level. Politico-economic and cultural constraints to increased participation, especially by the marginalized segments of society in decision-making processes, should be addressed as a top priority; such participation has been a primary focus of Agenda 21.

6. Comments were also provided to highlight FAO's particular interest in the relationship between systematic discrimination against women with respect to the development process and the environment, recalling that the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action recognized that poverty and environmental degradation were closely interrelated.

7. As the world's primary food producers, women played an important role in the preservation of the environment and in environmentally sustainable development. However, the lack of security of land ownership and tenure and the lack of access to agricultural resources, including credits to purchase less environmentally damaging technologies, limited women farmers' choices, thus contributing to the environment's further degradation.

8. FAO warned that unless environmentally sound practices were introduced on a large scale, the growth of the agricultural sector would only be short term. Women farmers, as subsistence food producers, were likely to be the worst hit.

9. Referring to resolution 42/1 on human rights and land rights discrimination adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-second session, FAO formulated a number of recommendations aimed at the improvement of women's access to agricultural resources and facilities for

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1/ See Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Nineteenth Special Session (A/S-19/29).

their participation in credit schemes, the need to establish a mechanism to implement prevailing legislation in regard to land rights and ensure equal access to land titles for both women and men, particularly female-headed households, as well as legal literacy and technical training programmes on environmentally sound farming practices for rural women.

## II. SUBJECTS OF COMMON INTEREST AND CONCERN IN RESPECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AS REFLECTED IN THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS NINETEENTH SPECIAL SESSION

10. The Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Nineteenth Special Session of the General Assembly referred to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development as a landmark event which had launched a new global partnership for sustainable development, a partnership which respected the indivisibility of environmental protection and the development process.

11. Having reviewed the progress achieved in the implementation of the commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development over the past five years, the Ad Hoc Committee highlighted a number of areas, particularly areas of a cross-sectoral nature the implementation of which required urgent action, and proposed strategies for accelerating progress towards sustainable development.

12. In this context, the Ad Hoc Committee noted the need for a greater integration at all policy-making levels - economic, social and environmental - and at operational levels, including the lowest administrative levels possible. The following areas of environmental and human rights concerns were developed in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee under the chapter dealing with the integration of economic, social and environmental objectives:

### An enabling international economic climate

13. Although globalization presents new opportunities and challenges, only a limited number of developing countries have been able to take advantage of recent trends, attracting large inflows of external private capital and experiencing significant export-led growth and acceleration of growth in per capita gross domestic product (GDP). African countries and the least developed countries, in particular, have shown slow or negative growth and continue to be marginalized due to poverty-related problems, low levels of social development, inadequate infrastructure and lack of capital.

14. As a result of globalization, external factors have become critical in determining the success or failure of developing countries in their national efforts. Thus, the Ad Hoc Committee placed a particular emphasis on the need for a mutually supportive balance between the international and the national environment in the pursuit of sustainable development and for a dynamic and enabling international economic environment supportive of international cooperation, particularly in the fields of finance, technology transfer and debt and trade.

Eradicating poverty

15. The full integration of people living in poverty into economic, social and political life and the empowerment of women were underlined as critical factors for the eradication of poverty. The provision of basic social services and food security in an equitable manner is a necessary precondition for such integration and empowerment.

16. Priority actions recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee in terms of poverty alleviation included: providing universal access to basic social services, including basic education, health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation; progressively developing social protection systems to protect those who are not in a position to protect themselves; addressing the disproportionate impact of poverty on women, in particular by removing legislative, policy, administrative and customary barriers to women's equal access to productive resources and credit; increasing the share of official development assistance (ODA) for poverty eradication; encouraging an effective application of the 20/20 initiative and intensifying international cooperation to support measures undertaken by developing countries to eradicate poverty within an integral and multidimensional approach.

Population

17. Recognizing the interrelationship between economic growth, poverty, employment, environment and sustainable development, the Ad Hoc Committee stressed the need to encourage and promote the current decline in population growth through the expansion of basic education, with full and equal access for girls and women to health care, including reproductive health care and family planning.

Health

18. Given the clear linkage between health and environmental conditions, the lack of information on the two subjects should be addressed in an integrated and coherent manner in the framework of national and subnational sustainable development plans. Besides, health issues should be incorporated into development programmes as a component of environmental assessment.

19. The Ad Hoc Committee called for support to countries' and international organizations' efforts to eradicate the major infectious diseases, to improve and expand basic health services and to provide safe drinking water. It was also necessary to take adequate measures to reduce indigenous cases of vaccine-preventable diseases through the promotion of widespread immunization programmes, promote accelerated research and reduce the transmission of other major infectious diseases. Other environmental health risks such as unsafe uses of lead, tobacco and ambient and indoor air pollution need to be adequately addressed in local, national and regional preventive strategies with a view to reducing their potential effects.

Sustainable human settlements

20. Reference was made to urban concerns as common concerns for both industrialized and developing countries. As a cross-sectoral phenomenon,

global urbanization has had an impact on all aspects of sustainable development. New and additional resources are needed to implement the goals set up by the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlement (Habitat II), and in Agenda 21.

21. Solutions to achieve more sustainable human settlements development could be envisaged through the transfer of expertise and technology, capacity-building, decentralization of authority, through, inter alia, strengthening of local capacity and private-public partnership to improve the provision and environmentally sound management of infrastructure and social services.

Fresh water

22. Fresh water and hazardous wastes were identified by the Ad Hoc Committee as part of several specific areas that are of widespread concern since failure to reverse current trends in these areas, notably in resource degradation, will have disastrous effects on social and economic development, on human health and on environmental protection for all countries, particularly developing countries.

23. The Ad Hoc Committee deplored that more than one fifth of all people still do not have access to safe drinking water and more than one half of humanity lacks adequate sanitation. Concern was expressed regarding the increasing stress on water supplies caused by unsustainable use patterns, affecting both water quality and quantity, and the widespread lack of access to safe water supply and suitable sanitation in many developing countries.

24. A wide range of recommendations have been formulated with a view to ensuring the optimal use and protection of all fresh-water resources to meet the needs of everyone on the planet including: granting high priority to the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes for integrated watershed management; strengthening regional and international cooperation for technological transfer and the financing of integrated water resource programmes and projects; providing enabling national and international environment to encourage public and private investments; and the recognition of water as a social and economic good with a vital role in the satisfaction of basic human needs, food security, poverty alleviation and the protection of ecosystems. In this connection, due consideration should be given to the promotion of the harmonious management and development of scarce water resources and to generating financial resources for investment and treatment facilities, notably in developing countries.

Hazardous wastes

25. While commending the substantial progress in the implementation of the Basel Convention, the Fourth Lomé Convention and other regional conventions the Ad Hoc Committee pointed to the urgency of defining the type of hazardous wastes controlled under the Basel Convention and to negotiate, adopt and implement a protocol on liability and compensation for damage resulting from the transboundary movement and disposal of hazardous wastes. Integrated management solutions were also recommended to minimize urban and industrial waste generation and to promote recycling and re-use.

## III. ROLE OF RELEVANT ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

26. The Ad Hoc Committee called on all organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, within their respective areas, to strengthen, individually and jointly, the support for national efforts to implement Agenda 21 and to make their efforts and actions consistent with national plans, policies and priorities of Member States.

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# PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

# SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

Report by the Secretary-General prepared in accordance with Commission decision 1997/102

Addendum

## I. COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENTS AND BODIES

### United Nations Environment Programme

[Original: English]
[20 January 1999]

1. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) reported that the main focus of its activities in the field of human rights and the environment during the past two years has been the provision of assistance to developing countries and countries in economic transition in building national capacities for the development of environmental legislation and institutions, inter alia through:

(a) Assisting in the review and development of national and international environmental law, including the implementation of multilateral agreements through national legislation, with the involvement of all stakeholders including non-governmental organizations and the private sector;

(b) Providing advisory services to sensitize Governments with regard to the need to incorporate in the Constitution, in framework environmental laws or in international environmental instruments, provisions on the individual's right to a clean and healthy environment, access to justice and information - including prior informed consent procedures - public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters;

(c) Training in environmental law, policy and institutions through seminars and workshops dealing inter alia with public access to environmental information and education, providing opportunities in environmental decision-making and increasing access to judicial and administrative procedures at both the national and international levels;

(d) Creating public awareness in regard to environmental rights through the development of and access to electronic information systems, and publications on environmental law, including training manuals, legislative guidelines and the compilation of existing laws, for example, the Compendium of Environmental Laws of African Countries that provide comparative legal information and facilitate the exchange of such information;

(e) Increasing public awareness regarding access to judicial and administrative remedies nationally and internationally: sensitizing magistrates, judges, prosecutors and lawyers and organizing environmental litigation workshops to assess the applicability of the jurisprudence under various jurisdictions and examine the utilization of analogies in different situations.

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# PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS: SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

## Human rights and bioethics

## Report of the Secretary-General

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Executive summary

This report draws attention to recent developments in international bioethics law. The Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights, adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on 11 November 1997, contains human rights standards and establishes an ethical framework for activities in this field. The United Nations General Assembly, at its fifty-third session, endorsed the Declaration.

Taking into account recent replies and those analysed in the two previous reports, it may be noted that increasing numbers of countries have enacted laws on the subject. These laws mainly deal with the application in medicine of new advances in biology and in the protection of human beings, in particular organ transplants, family planning, new human reproduction technologies and biomedical research involving human subjects. The replies received show that a legal framework exists which in principle ensures that the progress of science and technology benefits people without infringing their rights. However, there are problems of protecting the individual in the event of biomedical experimentation, especially to ensure respect for the integrity of persons participating in such research and their free and informed consent based on an assessment of the risks involved, in order to avoid any untoward incident or undesirable effect.

The machinery for the effective promotion of ethical standards includes legislation, administrative regulations, special governmental machinery, committees on ethics, safety inspections services and safety testing of new equipment. Such mechanisms exist in all States which sent replies.

In the conclusions and recommendations the Commission on Human Rights and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights are encouraged to participate in the implementation of the UNESCO Declaration. The need was identified for further research into some aspects of the issue and it is recommended that developing countries be provided with specific assistance in the form of technical cooperation, transfer of technology and exchanges of information among relevant institutions and professional societies.

This report also analyses the concept of family planning from a human rights perspective as defined by relevant international conferences.

## Introduction

1. At its fifty-third session, the Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1997/71, aware of the rapid development of the life sciences and the dangers that certain practices may pose to the integrity and dignity of the individual and seeking to ensure that scientific progress benefits individuals and develops in a manner respectful of fundamental human rights, invited Governments, the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the World Health Organization, and other intergovernmental, particularly regional, organizations and non-governmental organizations to inform the Secretary-General of activities being carried out to ensure that the life sciences develop in a manner respectful of human rights and beneficial to humanity as a whole.

2. The Commission also invited Governments to inform the Secretary-General of legislative or other measures taken to this end. It further invited Governments to consider establishing independent, multidisciplinary and pluralist committees of ethics to assess, notably in conjunction with the International Bioethics Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the ethical, social and human rights questions raised by the biomedical research undergone by human beings and, in particular, research relating to the human genome and its applications; it also invited them to inform the Secretary-General of the establishment of any such bodies, with a view to promoting exchanges of experience between such institutions.

3. The Commission also requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the basis of these contributions for consideration by the Commission at its fifty-fifth session. The present report is submitted to the Commission in pursuance of its resolution 1997/71.

4. Pursuant to that resolution, the Secretary-General, by a communication dated 12 June 1997, invited States and interested intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to submit their contributions to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights by 30 January 1998.

5. By 7 December 1998, replies had been received from the Governments of Croatia, Cuba, Denmark, France, Germany, Portugal and Turkey, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

6. Attention is drawn in this connection to the 1995 report on the same subject (E/CN.4/1995/74), which analysed measures taken by the United Nations in this field. In particular, a number of standards adopted by United Nations organs relating to human rights and bioethics were reproduced and described. That report and the 1997 report (E/CN.4/1997/66) also included replies from a number of Governments, UNFPA, two United Nations specialized agencies (UNESCO and WHO), one intergovernmental organization (the Council of Europe), two non-governmental organizations (the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences and the Commonwealth Medical Association) and the Institute

of Health and Law of the University of Neuchâtel. Since these materials are not reproduced in the present report, readers interested in them may wish to consult the 1995 and 1997 reports.

## I. LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER MEASURES TAKEN AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS TO ENSURE THAT THE LIFE SCIENCES DEVELOP IN A MANNER RESPECTFUL OF HUMAN RIGHTS

### A. General observations

7. In the replies received it has been noted that the 1990s have been especially fruitful years for the development of international bioethics law. Reproductive health and rights have been firmly established and defined in international conferences, such as the International Conference on Population and Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. It was also emphasized that reproductive rights "rest on the recognition of the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. It also includes the right of all to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence as expressed in human rights documents". 1/ Reference was made to the fact that, on 19 November 1996, the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Biomedicine, which marked the emergence of specifically European principles aimed at ensuring that scientific advances benefit human kind as a whole without detracting from human rights.

8. Furthermore, on 11 November 1997, the General Conference of UNESCO adopted the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights. The Declaration was the result of several years of work by the International Bioethics Committee of UNESCO on behalf of the international community. It is considered as a concrete contribution to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In its resolution 1997/15, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities took note of the work of UNESCO in the field of the human genome and emphasized the need for a standard-setting framework to ensure that genetic research and its application are developed in a harmonious way that demonstrates regard for human dignity, in particular for the dignity and the way of life of indigenous people.

9. Governments' replies demonstrated that beneficial coexistence between the advances of science and technology and human rights and dignity was both possible and desirable but there was a need to supervise scientific activity and to surround scientific research with legal and material safeguards, while respecting scientists' right to freedom of research.

10. The Government of Cuba considered that many human rights related to bioethics were closely linked to health care and referred to Cuban legislation on these issues.

## B. Legislative, administrative and other measures aimed at protecting human rights in the bioethical context

### 1. Medical treatment

11. Article 5 (a) of the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights provides that research, treatment or diagnosis affecting an individual's genome shall be undertaken only after rigorous and prior assessment of the potential risk and benefits pertaining thereto and in accordance with any other requirement of national law. In cases of interventions on persons who do "not have the capacity to consent", "consent or authorization shall be obtained in a manner prescribed by law, guided by the person's best interest" (art. 5 (b)). This applies especially to sick or very young children, elderly persons or persons with mental illness.

12. The Government of Cuba reported on the health care provided to its population, operating in conformity with universally accepted ethical standards.

### 2. Medical research involving human beings and experiments on human subjects

13. Article 5 (c) of the Declaration provides for "the right of each individual to decide whether or not to be informed of the results of genetic examination ..." while paragraph (d) provides that "in the case of research, protocols shall, in addition, be submitted for prior review in accordance with relevant national and international research standards or guidelines".

14. Article 7 of the Declaration states that "genetic data associated with an identifiable person and stored or processed for the purposes of research ... must be held confidential in the conditions set by law". This principle complements the principles and norms of confidentiality set forth in article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Guidelines for the Regulation of Computerized Personal Data Files.

15. According to article 10, "no research or research applications concerning the human genome ... should prevail over respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human dignity of individuals or, where applicable, of groups of people". Article 11 prohibits practices which are contrary to human dignity, such as reproductive cloning of human beings. Article 12 (b) states that freedom of research is part of freedom of thought. It further provides that the applications of research, including in biology, genetics and medicine, concerning the human genome, should seek to offer relief from suffering and improve the health of individuals and humankind as a whole.

16. In order to minimize high-risk experiments, the Government of Germany stated that the primary functions of an ethics committee included protecting patients and subjects from hazardous research, mainly by minimizing exposure to and prohibiting or restricting high-risk experiments. In addition, the ethics committee had the task of protecting researchers by preventing them from embarking on projects that were questionable from a legal and ethical point of view.

17. In Turkey, regulations relating to the ethical aspects of clinical research on drugs in which human subjects are involved were elaborated by the Ministry of Health. According to the Law on Basic Health Services of 7 May 1987, such research is conditional upon the consent of an individual and the permission of the Ministry. All research carried out on living organisms, especially the one carried out on human beings, were under the control of ethics committees.

### 3. Family planning: artificial insemination and abortion

18. Family planning is a basic human right as defined in a number of human rights instruments analysed in previous reports. The World Population Plan of Action, adopted by the 1974 World Population Conference in Bucharest, extended this right to "all couples and individuals". The Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) states: "The aim of family planning programmes must be to enable couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information and means to do so and to ensure informed choices and make available a full range of safe and effective methods ... . The principle of informed free choice is essential to the long-term success of family planning programmes. Any form of coercion has no part to play" (para. 7.12).

19. UNFPA pointed out that in the past 20 years, countries worldwide dramatically expanded the availability of family planning services, accelerating a decline in fertility rates. At the same time, it referred to what it considered a mistaken notion that family planning meant promotion of abortion. This was totally incorrect since family planning helped prevent the need for abortion. It emphasized that abortion was not a method of family planning and it did not support abortion in any country.

20. The ICPD urged countries "to deal with the health impact of unsafe abortion as a major public health concern and to reduce the recourse to abortion through expanded and improved family planning services" (para. 8.25). It called on Governments "to take appropriate steps to help women avoid abortion ... and in all cases provide for the humane treatment and counselling of women who have had recourse to abortion" (para. 7.24).

21. As pointed out in the two previous reports, there are reproductive rights that are already recognized in national laws and international human rights instruments. 2/ Both the ICPD and the Fourth World Conference on Women further elaborated and defined those rights. Both conferences also stated that reproductive health was a broad concept that included more than family planning, e.g. pre- and post-natal care, safe delivery, infant and women's health care; prevention and appropriate treatment of infertility; prevention of abortion and the management of the consequences of abortion; treatment of reproductive tract infections, sexually transmitted diseases and other reproductive health conditions; and information, education and counselling, as appropriate, on human sexuality, reproductive health, and responsible parenthood. 3/

### 4. Developments in biotechnology

22. Attention was drawn to the working paper presented by Mr. Osman El-Hajjé to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in 1997, which dealt with the potentially adverse consequences of scientific progress in respect of the integrity, dignity and human rights of the individual (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/34). The paper states that advances achieved in the fields of life and health sciences and the awareness of their human implications have marked the end of this century, at a time when man is able to combine his knowledge with the power to change the development of species, including his own, by using the latest discoveries in genetics and embryology. In his view, in recent years, some scientific advances have been misused. One such example is facilitating pregnancies in women beyond the natural age of procreation and the possible consequences of this practice for a child's parentage and rights.

23. The paper also mentions genetic applications in the area of prenatal or pre-implant diagnosis. It states that in order to preserve the human species, it would be preferable to use gene therapy with caution, restricting it to somatic (body) cells, with the exclusion of germ cells (i.e. the cells used for sexual reproduction). Recent genetic research leading to the creation of mammal clones gave rise to mixed feelings, since it raised questions not only about man's dignity, but also about his social ties. This type of research might create two types of human beings: the real one and the clone, with all the consequences one might imagine. It would therefore appear necessary to assert the primacy of man over science when consideration is given to studies into the human embryo, man himself or his genome.

24. Cuba reported that interest in bioethics has grown considerably since the late 1980s. A new university course entitled "Health technology" was introduced in 1989 and included a full semester devoted to bioethics. It covers the following issues: ethical dimension of public health; education and communication as an ethical question in the domain of health; ethics and humanity in the relationship with a healthy person; professional error and confidentiality; impact of the scientific and technical revolution on health care; bioethical problems at the beginning and end of life; and quality of health services. In 1994, a multidisciplinary group of university teachers was established in Cuba to promote bioethics in medical schools and to design an intensive course on general bioethics.

## C. Machinery for the effective promotion of ethical standards

25. The methods adopted or proposed for the promotion and protection of human rights at the national level and relating to the issues dealt with in the present report were analysed extensively in the previous reports. Those methods included legislation, administrative regulations and licensing of devices, official guidelines, special governmental machinery, codes of ethics, science policies, economic policies, safety inspection services and safety testing of new equipment.

26. According to articles 51 and 52 of the Law on Medical Protection of Croatia (published in the Official Gazette, No. 1/97), commissions on ethics are established in medical institutions with the task of ensuring that their

work is based on the principles of medical ethics and deontology. The law also defined the scope of the competence of those bodies. The Commission on Ethics and Deontology of the Croatian Medical Association participated in regional activities concerning bioethics, including a meeting of national committees on bioethics in Paris and in the signing of a document on the prohibition of human cloning with other European States.

27. In addition, in one of the earlier reports (E/CN.4/1199/Add.1, paras. 170 and 172) attention was drawn to the fact that national mechanisms were necessary for assessment - including the assessment of possible side-effects and long-range effects - of whether the time was right for particular innovations and whether their advantages outweighed for the society the discernible disadvantages. The Secretary-General has received additional information and comments on a number of these issues.

28. The Government of Cuba reported that at all levels of the National Health system operating in the country there were medical ethics committees which ensured observance of patients' rights. Chairs of bioethics had been established with the aim of organizing the ethical training of Cuban specialists in this sphere. At the end of 1993, work was completed on the draft Code on the Professional Ethics of Scientific Workers. This Code coincides in its essential aspects with universally accepted principles and standards. In 1996, the Standing Commission on Ethics of the Cuban Academy of Sciences was established which became the steering group of the Cuban Committee of Ethics, affiliated with the Cuban National Commission for UNESCO.

29. In 1993, the Ministry of Health of Cuba established a national centre for clinical testing with a 'review and ethics committee' to supervise research projects. Also in 1993, the bioethics sections of the Cuban Scientific Society for Legal Medicine were established and a workshop was held on ethics and genetics. A multidisciplinary bioethics group was established within Hermanos Ameijeiras hospital. The Cuban Code of Ethics and the work of the committees on medical ethics needed to be updated and perfected.

30. In Denmark, a system of scientific ethical committees has existed since 1979, based on the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. 4/ Act No. 503 of 24 June 1992 on the Scientific Ethical Committee System and Handling of Biomedical Research Projects was amended by consolidated Act No. 221 of 4 March 1997. 5/ The scientific ethical committee system consisted of a number of regional committees and a central committee. The committees were independent and included professionals as well as lay members.

31. The Danish law ensured that biomedical scientific projects involving human beings could not be initiated before the regional committee had given its approval, in order to secure the protection of persons participating in scientific projects. The law strongly underlined that the committees had to ensure that the possible risks connected with the project had been thoroughly analysed.

32. The Government of Germany pointed out that the functions of ethics committees are regulated by a number of provisions of different federal laws. For instance, in accordance with section 40 of the Federal Drug Law of 1995, the commencement of a clinical trial of a pharmaceutical product on human

beings required prior approval by an independent ethics committee established under Länder law. In addition, pursuant to section 17 of the Medical Devices Act, clinical trials may only be started when the approval of an ethics committee has been obtained of the plan of research. Subsection 7 of section 17 of the Act stipulates that the ethics committee must be an independent, multidisciplinary body registered with the competent higher Federal authority. Both laws established that in the absence of approval from an ethics committee, clinical trials could only be commenced if the competent higher Federal authority had not objected within 60 days of examining the documentation.

33. The Standard Professional Code of German Doctors, adopted in 1988, requires physicians intending to conduct clinical trials on human beings or to carry out epidemiological research to obtain counselling from an ethics committee on any questions of professional ethics and law the project may give rise to. In addition, a physician had to be heard by an ethics committee before embarking on any research involving human gametes and living embryonic tissue. In 1995, the Federal Medical Society established a Central Commission for the Safeguarding of Ethical Principles in Medicine and Related Areas. The tasks of that Commission included, in particular, the following:

(a) Making statements on ethical questions stemming from the advances and technological developments in medical science and related areas that are valid throughout the Federal Republic of Germany; and

(b) Commenting on issues that are of fundamental importance to the ethical aspects of the duties emanating from the exercise of the medical profession.

34. The French Government sent a list of laws on medical treatment in the bioethical context, organ transplantation, biomedical research involving human subjects and new human reproduction technologies, and the texts of laws relating to the national mechanisms dealing with bioethical issues. 6/ The body of French laws in the field of bioethics is considered quite comprehensive. A number of texts adopted between 1988 and 1997 were incorporated into the Civil Code, the Public Health Code and the law on information technology and freedom. The French legislation covers most issues in respect of the subject matter except euthanasia and reproductive human cloning.

35. By decree No. 97-555 of 29 May 1997, the National Consultative Committee for Ethics in the Life Sciences and Health was established. Article 4 of the decree provides that the Committee may be informed of a situation by the President of the National Assembly, the President of the Senate or a member of the Government, as well as by an institute of higher education, a public institution or a foundation recognized as working in the public interest and whose principal activity is research, technological development or the promotion and protection of health. It can also decide to take up questions brought by persons other than those mentioned or by one or more of its members. Within the context of its mission the Committee organizes each year a public conference on ethical problems in the fields of the life sciences and health.

36. The Portuguese Government attached a list of laws demonstrating that the ethical standards which have human rights components are enforced through the operation of law and are supervised by special governmental machinery, in particular by the Ethical Commissions for Health. 2/

37. In Turkey, the Ministry of Health put into effect a Directive of 1993 that regulates the ethical, administrative and practical aspects of drugs-related trials on human subjects. As a part of its implementation a Central Ethical Committee was set up at the Ministry. It was supplemented by local ethical committees at each medical school and training hospital. At present, there are 45 local ethical committees. The ethical committees are charged with protecting the rights, integrity and welfare of the volunteers involved in drug trials. In particular, they control human experimentation and protect human personality from dangers related to it in accordance with principles embodied in the Declaration of Helsinki. In addition, research ethics committees which work under the guidance of the Central Ethics Committee are being established in universities and State hospitals. In an institution where a research ethics committee exists it is requested to approve all clinical drug research.

38. There are two other kinds of committees in Turkey. One is the Ethics Committee of the Turkish Medical Association, which was established to determine the attitudes of the Association towards ethical issues, and the other is the Hospital Ethics Committee, which is being established now. The revision and clarification of the aims, structures and functions of these institutions is thought to be necessary.

39. Attention may be drawn to UNESCO General Conference resolution 29 C/Resolution 17 of 11 November 1997, entitled "Implementation of the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights". In particular, in paragraph 1 (a), the General Conference urged member States, in the light of the provisions of the Declaration, to take appropriate steps, including the introduction of legislation or regulations, to promote the principles set forth in the Declaration and to promote their implementation. The resolution provides for a number of other measures to implement the Declaration, in particular defining the tasks of the International Bioethics Committee to ensure follow-up to the Declaration.

## II. CONCLUSION

40. The adoption of the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Biomedicine demonstrates that the rapid development of science and its technological applications have been accompanied by the emergence of specific international principles aimed at ensuring that scientific advances benefit human rights and protect human dignity.

41. A positive development at the national level is the establishment of ethics committees to supervise scientific activity, to foresee and prevent possible excesses, to alert the authorities and public opinion, and to act in an advisory capacity to assist public authorities as well as scientific researchers and their professional organizations.

42. Further standards are likely to be elaborated and mechanisms established at the international level, especially to ensure that genetic research and its applications are developed in a harmonious way that demonstrates regard for human rights and dignity, particularly of vulnerable groups of people.

## Notes

1/ Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), para. 7.3. In Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18).

2/ See E/CN.4/1995/74, para. 101.

3/ See ICPD Programme of Action, paras. 7.2 and 7.6.

4/ In the principles, see E/CN.4/1995/74, paras. 65-67.

5/ Available for consultation in the files of the secretariat.

6/ Ibid.

7/ Ibid.

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